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POETICA EROTICA

VOLUME
TWO

POETICA EROTICA

A
Collection of Rare and Curious
Amatory Verse

EDITED BY

T. R. SMITH

Volume Two

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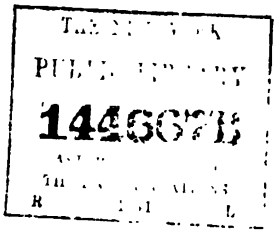

AUTHORS AND TITLES

AIKEN, CONRAD

Discordants 266
Red Is the Color of Blood 264
The Dance of Life 267

ANONYMOUS

A Dialogue 17
Aftermath 230
A Gentle Breeze 14
A Logical Song 119
A Love Song 105
A Midnight Lunch 217
An Answer 119
An Epithalamium 16
As I Sat at My Spinning Wheel 29
As I Walked in the Woods 32
As Jockey and Jenny Together 38
A Song 101
A Woman's Death Wound 212
A Young Man and a Maid 44
Beauty and Desire 36
Boyhood 227
Celemene, Pray Tell Me 15
Celia Vanquished 117
Celladon, When Spring Comes On 14
Chastity 109
Cloe's Precaution 68
Denial 77
Dick and Doll 108
Dick and Kate 99
Down the Brim Davie 71
Flora Drest 62
Fly, Fly Away from My Sight 12
How Can I Keep My Maidenhead 102
In a Cellar at Sodom 13
John and Nell 40
Little Lessons 226
Maria 104
My Jockey Blyth 72
O Mither Dear 54
On Lesbia 117

38X487

Ranging the Plain 32
Says Dick to Dolly 40
Sit Down, My Dear Sylvia 27
Songs from The Cupid 74, 76
State and Ambition 9
Sylvia a May Roving 35
The Bashful Maid 41
The Bunch of Rushes 164
The Country Lass 70
The Cumberland Lass 33
The Danger Is Over 33
The Distressed Maid 163
The Dream 63
The End 106
The Enjoyment 47
The Fall of Man 232
The Fashionable Shepherdess 22
The Fickle Maid 102
The Fight 107
The Gallant Schemer's Petition 54
The Honeymoon 121
The Jilts 26
The Jolly Young Swain 37
The Kingdom of the Birds 10
The Merry Little Maid 235
The Mill, Mill O 67
The Nameless One 136
The Night Is Come 48
The Pipe of Love 103
The Power of Love 63
The Presbyterian Wedding 53
The Quaker's Song 21
The Queen of May 18
The Ramblers 111
The Ravished Lover 73
The Rehearsal 210
The Schoolmaster's Lesson 42
The Silent Flute 43
The Surprised Nymph 30
The Wee One 136
The Willing Maid 123
The Winchester Wedding 23
The Wonderful Grot 110
Thou Art a Flower 229
To Charming Cealie's Arms I Flew 18
To Choose a Friend 19
To Have and to Hold 231
Tom and Doll 25
Too Cold to Lie Alone 135
Walking Down the Highland Town 28
When I Court Thee 76
Would Ye Have a Young Virgin 12
Young Strephon and Phillis 45

BANCKS, JOHN
In Chloe's Chamber 78

BEDDOES, THOMAS LOVELL
Love-in-idleness 142

BROWN, THOMAS
A Satire on Marriage 64
Melisinda's Misfortune 65

BRYAN, ALFRED
Beauty 314
Enthralled 313
Love Charms 314
Selfishness 314

BURKE, THOMAS
A Love Lesson 297
Of Politicians 296

BURNS, ROBERT
Anna 124
'Gie the Lass Her Fairin 127
Godly Girzie 132
Jockey Was a Bonny Lad 129
John Anderson, My Jo 132
I Am a Bard 126
Sodger Laddie 125
The Bower of Bliss 128
The Fornicator 130
The Lass That Made the Bed for Me 134
The Yellow, Yellow Yorlin' 131
Wha Is That at My Bower Door 133
Whistle O'er the Lave O't 126

BU ZARD, CLAIRE
In the Restaurant 313
The Beauty Lover 287

BYRON, LORD
To Caroline 139

CAREY, HENRY
Sally Sweetbread's Soliloquy 48

CARPENTER, EDWARD
April 225
The Ocean of Sex 225

CENTLIVRE, MRS.
Songs from Plays 93, 94
COATES, ARCHIE A.
Rivals 287
COHN, PAULINE
Rest 283
CORBIN, ALICE
Song 302
CROWLEY, ALEISTER
A Saint's Damnation 223
Lot 221
The Altar of Artemis 218
DAVIDSON, JOHN
Lily Dale 188
DEVONSHIRE, DUKE OF
To Lydia 115
DOWSON, ERNEST
Non sum qualis eram 224
DUNCAN, WALTER JACK
Yvonne 288
DURFEY, TOM (THE YOUNGER)
The Way to Win Her 100
EATON, CHARLOTTE
Meditation—the Mirror 282
Night-on-the-Waters 282
Song of Psyyha 281
EDDY, RUTH BASSETT
Love Athirst 312
ELIOT, T. S.
Sweeney Erect 295
ESTCOURT, MR.
As I Was Walking 39
EVANS, DONALD
Dinner 255
Infidelities 254

Loving Kindnesses 255
Nuptial Night 253
Resemblance 254
Sonnet Eternal 254

FAWKES, FRANCIS
Hymn to Venus 118

FIELD, MICHAEL
Sapphic Odes 183-187

FONTAINE, JEAN DE LA
The Avaricious Wife 90
The Dressmaker 92
The Husband-Confessor 88
The Pack Saddle 92
The Two Friends 91

GAY, JOHN
An Epilogue 4
A Song 7
The Coquet Mother 5
The Fan 3
The Mad-dog 7

GILBERT, BERNARD
Love Not Too Much 280

GITLOW, ELSIE
Come and Lie with Me 312

GRAY, JOHN
The Barber 189

GREENTHAL, HAROLD
A Bargain 307
Lâila Sleeps 309
La ruse 306
L'attente 305
La tête Coupee 305
Le Cadi Perclus 307
L'eveil 306
Les motifs d'amour 306
Seduction 308

HANBURY-WILLIAMS, SIR CHARLES
A Lamentable Case 82
An Ode to Lord Lincoln 81

HARDY, THOMAS
The Dark-eyed Gentleman 252

HEINE, HEINRICH
Dieser Liebe Toller 279
Iche Liebe Solche 279

HEWLETT, MAURICE
Leto's Child 251

HOPE, LAURENCE
Afridi Love 246
All Farewells 241
Disloyal 242
Early Love 240
Song by Gulbaz 248
Song of Kham Zada 243
Song of Rameswaram Temple Girl 239
The Lament of Yasmini 236
The Teak Forest 243

HORNE, HERBERT P.
Erotomachia 187

JACOBS, F.
Prayer 311

JOHNS, ORRICK
She Lay Quite Still 321
Surrender 322
The Answer 321
The Fashionable Hour 323

KIPLING, RUDYARD
"Mary, Pity Women" 214
The Ladies 213

KLING, JOSEPH
Farewell (To D——) 283

LAWRENCE, D. H.
A Bad Beginning 272
Excursion 271
Last Words to Miriam 269
Lilies in the Fire 277
Mystery 270
New Year's Eve 273
New Year's Night 274

Reproach 271
Wedlock 274

LOCKMAN, JOHN
The Penitent Nun 69

LOUŸS, PIERRE
Eros 200
From the "Songs of Bilitis" 190-199

MALLOCH, GEORGE RESTON
Beauty 264
Knowledge 263

McCLUSKEY, KATHERINE
Bridegroom 305

MEREDITH, GEORGE
The Rape of Aurora 141

MILLAY, EDNA ST. VINCENT
Sonnet 303
The Betrothal 302

MISHKIN, OLGA
Irony 324
Surrender 323

MITCHELL, MR.
Fancy's All 70

MONTAGUE, LADY MARY WORTLEY
The Lover 83

MOORE, GEORGE
A Sapphic Dream 176
Rondo 175
Sonnets 175, 176
The Triumph of the Flesh 174

MOORE, THOMAS
Did Not 138
From the Odes of Anacreon 137

NICHOLS, ROBERT
Sonnets to Aurelia 298

OLDMIXON, JOHN
The Grove 101

OPPENHEIM, JAMES
A Love Song 278
OSWALD, JAMES
The Progress of Love 79
PATTISON, WILLIAM
Nancy the Bed-maker 51
The Disappointed Maid 49
The Enjoyment 50
POPE, ALEXANDER
An Imitation of Chaucer 55
Phryne 56
Prologue to "The Wife of Bath" 56
POUND, EZRA
And Day Comes On 256
Me, Happy Night 257
PRIOR, MATTHEW
A Song 98
Chaste Florimel 94
Pallas and Venus 95
Since We Your Husband Daily See 98
To a Young Gentleman in Love 96
ROSSETTI, DANTE GABRIEL
Her Love 178
Herself 178
Supreme Surrender 177
The Kiss 177
Youth and Lordship 178
SALTUS, FRANCIS
A Courtesan's Whim 167
In Sodom 168
Puella Erotica 166
Song of the Gay Zonah 170
Song of the Priest of Bel 170
Song of the Youth 171
The Awakening 168
The Wife of Lot 172
To ——— 165
Women 167
SCOTT, EVELYN
Bread Poems 293
The Tunnel 294

SEDLEY, SIR CHARLES

An Epigram to Flavia 46
On Fruition 46
The Forward Love 47
To Bassa 46

SHERIDAN, RICHARD BRINSLEY

The Geranium 120

SHORES, ROBERT J.

The Jest 256

SNOW, ROYALL

Watteau Panels 304

ST. ARDIENNE, PIERRE

A Une Rebelle 309-311

STERLING, GEORGE

At Midnight 318
Flame 319
Happiest 320
Infidels 318
The Golden Past 317
The Kiss of Consummation 318

STRANGE, MICHAEL

A Songs 291
Emotional 292
I Want of You 290

STRODE, MURIEL

Creation Songs 315

SWIFT, JONATHAN

Phyllis 60

SWINBURNE, ALGERNON CHARLES

A Ballad of Death 148
Before Dawn 158
Erotion 157
Fragoletta 154
Hermaphroditus 152
In the Orchard 156
Les Noyades 150
Love and Sleep 162
King David 160

SYMONS, ARTHUR

Bianca 206
Idealism 202
Leves Amores 203
Liber Amoris 207
Stella Maris 200
To One in Alienation 203
Two Sonnets 209
Variations upon Love 204

THEOBALD, MR.

The Bashful Lover 52

THOMPSON, VANCE

A Dead Woman 216

TIMBERLAKE, LEE

At Refuge 325
Infatuation 325
Midsummer 326

UNTERMEYER, LOUIS

Almost 301
Ivory and Rose 301
Summer Storm 300

VIERECK, GEORGE SYLVESTER

A Little Maid of Sappho 258
Love Triumphant 248
The Haunted House 250

VOLTAIRE (ERNEST DOWSON)

Charles VII and Agnes Sorel 84
Monrose and Agnes Sorel 87

VON WIEN, FLORENCE E.

Consummation 320
Sensuality 321

WAGSTAFF, BLANCHE SHOEMAKER

Bacchante 281
From "The Book of Love" 260

WEAVER, JOHN V. A.

Denoument 326

WHITMAN, WALT

A Woman Waits for Me 146
From Pent-up Aching Rivers 143
I Sing the Body Electric 145

WILDE, OSCAR
The Dryad 180
Young Charmian 181
WRIGHT, ZELLA MURIEL
May Woods 285
Song of Creation 286
YATES, W.
When Fanny to Woman 99

POETICA EROTICA

II

THE FAN

(From *The Fan*. By John Gay, 1713)

* * * * * * *

SEE, to his soft embraces how she steals,
And on his lips her warm caresses seals;
No more her hand the glitt'ring jav'lin holds,
But round his neck her eager arm she folds.
Why are our secrets by our blushes shown?
Virgins are virgins still—while 'tis unknown,
Here let her on some flowery bank be laid.
Where meeting beeches weave a grateful shade,
Her naked bosom wanton tresses grace,
And glowing expectation paints her face,
O'er her fair limbs a thin loose veil is spread,
Stand off, ye shepherds; fear Actaeon's head;
Let vig'rous Pan the unguarded minute seize,
And in a shaggy goat the virgin please,
Why are our secrets by our blushes shown?
Virgins are virgins still—while 'tis unknown.

There with just warmth Aurora's passion trace,
Let spreading crimson stain her virgin face;
(Behind, her rosy mantle loosely flows,
Her blooming features youthful health disclose).
See Cephalus her wanton airs despise,
While she provokes him with desiring eyes;
(Now unconstrain'd she will indulge her flame,
Prevailing love hath stifled all her shame).
To raise his passion she displays her charms,
His modest hand upon her bosom warms;
Nor looks, nor prayers, nor force his heart persuade,
But with disdain he quits the rosy maid.

Here let dissolving Leda grace the toy,
Warm cheeks and heaving breasts reveal her joy;
Beneath the pressing swan she pants for air,
While with his flutt'ring wings he fans the fair.
There let all-conqu'ring gold exert its power,
And soften Danae in a glitt'ring shower.

Would you warn beauty not to cherish pride,
Nor vainly in the treach'rous bloom confide,
On the machine the sage Minerva place,
With lineaments of wisdom mark her face;
See, where she lies near some transparent flood,
And with her piper cheers the resounding wood:
Her image in the looking glass she spies,
Her bloated cheeks, worn lips, and shrivelled eyes;
She breaks the guiltless pipe, and with disdain
Its shattered ruins flings upon the plain.
With the loud reed no more her cheek shall swell;
What, spoil her face! no. Warbling strains, farewell.
Shall arts—shall sciences employ the fair?
Those trifles are beneath Minerva's care.

From Venus let her learn the married life,
And all the virtuous duties of a wife.
Here on a couch extend the Cyprian dame,
Let her eye sparkle with the growing flame;
The God of war within her clinging arms,
Sinks on her lips, and kindles all her charms.
(The prying Sun their am'rous strife betrays,
And through the casement darts his treach'rous rays.)
Paint limping Vulcan with a husband's care,
And let his brow the cuckhold's honours wear;
Beneath the net the captive lovers place,
Their limbs entangled in a close embrace.
(The summon'd Gods survey the struggling bride,
And with contemptuous smiles the spouse deride.)
Let these amours adorn the new machine,
And female nature on the piece be seen;
So shall the fair as long as fans shall last
Learn from your bright examples to be chaste.

AN EPILOGUE

(By John Gay. From *The Wife of Bath*, 1713)

THE Toil of Wedlock five times bravely past,
You'll say 'twas cruel to be baulk'd at last.
Grown old in Cupid's camp—long versed in arms,

I from my youth have known the power of charms:
Was I to single combat ever slow?
Did I e'er turn my back upon the foe?
Is this the way old service is regarded,
And must the joyless widow be discarded?
Stint me not, Love—but while I yet survive,
Throw in another comfort to the five.
Bless me! when I reflect on former days!
Youth can make conquest sev'ral thousand ways;
I danced; I sang; I smiled—I looked demure,
And caught each lover with a diff'rent lure:
In frequent wedlock joined, was woman still,
And bowed subservient husbands to my will.
If reason governs man's superior mind,
A ready cunning prompts the female kind.
Then learn from me—so, Hymen, bless your lives,
Preserve the just prerogative of wives;
Know to command each look, each tear, each smile,
With eyes, and face, and tongue, and heart beguile:
Ev'n he that loves in search of game to roam,
By feigned reprisals may be kept at home.
Whenever Heav'n was pleased to take my spouse,
I never pined for thought of former vows;
'Tis true, I sighed, I wept, I sobbed at first,
And tore my hair—as decent widows—must;
But soon another husband dried mine eyes:
My life, my dear!—supplied the place of sighs:
Amidst continual love I've relished life,
A forward maid and a triumphant wife:
Then grant, O Cupid, this my latest prayer,
If no kind husband will relieve my care;
Since inclination yet outlives my face,
At least indulge me with a coup de grace.

THE COQUET MOTHER AND HER DAUGHTER

(A Song by John Gay, 1720)

I.

AT the close of the day,
When the bean-flower and hay
Breathed odours in every wind:
Love enliven'd the veins
Of the damsels and swains;
Each glance and each action was kind.

II.

Molly, wanton and free,
Kissed and sat on each knee,
  Fond ecstasy swam in her eyes.
See, thy mother is near,
Hark! she calls thee to hear
  What age and experience advise.

III.

Hast thou seen the blithe dove
Stretch her neck to her love,
  All glossy with purple and gold?
If a kiss he obtain,
She returns it again:
  What follows you need not be told.

IV.

Look ye, mother, she cried,
You instruct me in pride,
  And men by good-manners are won.
She who trifles with all
Is less likely to fall
  Than she who but trifles with one.

V.

Prithee, Molly, be wise,
Lest by sudden surprise
  Love should tingle in ev'ry vein:
Take a shepherd for life,
And when once you're a wife.
  You safely may trifle again.

VI.

Molly, smiling, replied,
Then I'll soon be a bride;
  Old Roger had gold in his chest.
But I thought all you wives
Chose a man for your lives.
  And trifled no more with the rest.

A SONG

(By John Gay. From *The Wife of Bath*, 1713)

THERE was a swain full fair,
Was tripping it o'er the grass,
And there he spied, with her nut-brown hair,
A pretty, tight country lass.
Fair damsel, says he,
With an air brisk and free,
Come let us each other know;
She blush'd in his face,
And replied with a grace,
Pray forbear, Sir:—no, no, no, no.

The lad being bolder grown,
Endeavoured to steal a kiss,
She cried, pish!—let me alone,
But held up her nose for the bliss.
And when he begun,
She would never have done,
But unto his lips she did grow,
Near smothered to death,
As soon as she'd breath,
She stammer'd out, no, no, no, no.

Come, come, says he, pretty maid,
Let's walk to yon private grove,
Cupid always delights in the cooling shade
There, I'll read thee a lesson of love.
She mends her pace,
And hastes to the place,
But if her love-lecture you'd know;
Let a bashful young muse
Plead the maiden's excuse,
And answer you,—no, no, no, no.

THE MAD-DOG

(A Tale by John Gay, 1720)

A PRUDE, at morn and ev'ning prayer,
Had worn her velvet cushion bare;
Upward she taught her eyes to roll,
As if she watched her soaring soul;
And when devotion warmed the crowd,
None sung, or smote their breast so loud:

Pale Penitence had mark'd her face
With all the meagre signs of grace.
Her mass-book was completely lined
With painted saints of various kind:
But when in ev'ry page she viewed
Fine ladies who the flesh subdued;
As quick her beads she counted o'er,
She cried—such wonders are no more!
She chose not to delay confession,
To bear at once a year's trangression,
But ev'ry week set all things even,
And balanced her accounts with heaven.

Behold her now in humble guise,
Upon her knees with downcast eyes
Before the Priest: she thus begins,
And, sobbing, blubbers forth her sins;
"Who could that tempting man resist?
My virtue languished, as he kissed;
I strove,—till I could strive no longer,
How can the weak subdue the stronger?"

The father asked her where and when?
How many? and what sort of men?
By what degrees her blood was heated?
How oft the frailty was repeated?
Thus have I seen a pregnant wench
All flushed with guilt before the bench,
The judges (waked by wanton thought)
Dive to the bottom of her fault,
They leer, they simper at her shame,
And make her call all things by name.

And now to sentence he proceeds,
Prescribes how oft to tell her beads;
Shows her what saints could do her good,
Doubles her fasts to cool her blood.
Eased of her sins, and light as air,
Away she trips, perhaps to prayer.
'Twas no such thing. Why then this haste?
The clock has struck, the hour is past,
And on the spur of inclination,
She scorn'd to bilk her assignation.

Whate'er she did, next week she came,
And piously confest the same;
The Priest, who female frailties pitied,
First chid her, then her sins remitted.

Madam, I grant there's something in it,
That virtue has th' unguarded minute;
But pray now tell me what are whores,
But women of unguarded hours?
Then you must sure have lost all shame.
What, ev'ry day, and still the same,
And no fault else! 'tis strange to find
A woman to one sin confined!
Pride is this day her darling passion,
The next day slander is in fashion;
Gaming succeeds; if fortune crosses,
Then virtue's mortgaged for her losses;
By use her fav'rite vice she loathes,
And loves new follies like new clothes:
But you, beyond all thought unchaste,
Have all sin center'd near your waist!
Whence is this appetite so strong?
Say, Madam, did your mother long?
Or is it luxury and high diet
That won't let virtue sleep in quiet?
She tells him now with meekest voice,
That she had never erred by choice,
Nor was their known a virgin chaster,
Till ruin'd by a sad disaster.

That she a fav'rite lap-dog had,
Which, (as she stroked and kiss'd) grew mad;
And on her lip a wound indenting,
First set her youthful blood fermenting.

* * * * * * *

STATE AND AMBITION, ALAS! WILL DECEIVE YE

(A Song set to a New Playhouse Tune, 1719)

STATE and Ambition, alas! will deceive ye,
There's no solid Joy but the Blessing of Love;
Scorn does of Pleasure fair Sylvia bereave ye,
Your Fame is not perfect till that you remove:
Monarchs that sway the vast Globe in their Glory,
Know Love is their brightest Jewel of Power;
Poor Philemon's Heart was ordained to adore ye,
Ah! then disdain his Passion no more.

Jove on his Throne was the Victim of Beauty,
His thunder laid by, he from Heaven came down;
Shaped like a Swan, to fair Leda paid Duty,
And prized her far more than his Heavenly crown:
She too was pleased with her beautiful Lover,
And stroak'd his white Plumes, and feasted her Eye;
His cunning in Loving knew well how to move her,
By Billing begins the business of Joy.

Since Divine Powers Examples have given,
If we should not follow their Precepts, we sin:
Sure 'twill appear an Affront to their Heaven,
If when the Gate opens we enter not in.
Beauty, my Dearest, was from the beginning,
Created to calm our Amorous Rage;
And she that against that Decree will be sinning,
In Youth still will find the Curse of old Age.

THE KINGDOM OF THE BIRDS

(A Dialogue between Mr. Pack and Mrs. Bradshaw, in the Opera, called *The Kingdom of the Birds*, 1719)

She. Oh Love if a God thou wilt be,
Do Justice in Favour of me
For yonder approaching I see
A Man with a Beard,
Who as I have heard,
Has often undone
Poor Maids that have none,
With sighing, and toying,
And crying, and lying,
And such kind of Foolery.

He. Fair Maid by your Leave,
My Heart does receive
Strange Pleasure to meet you here,
Pray tremble not so,
Nor offer to go,
I'll do ye no Harm, I swear,
I'll do ye no Harm, I swear.

She. My Mother is spinning at Home,
My Father works hard at his Loom,
And we here a milking are come,
Their Dinner they want,

Pray, Gentleman, don't
Make more ado on't,
Nor give us affront,
We're none of the Town
Will lie down for a Crown,
Then away, Sir, and give us Room.

He. By Phoebus, by Jove,
By Honour, by Love,
I'll do ye dear sweet no harm,
Your as fresh as a Rose,
I want one of those,
Ah, how such a Wife would charm,
Ah, how such a Wife would charm.

She. And can you then like the old Rule,
Be Conjugal, honest, and dull,
And marry, and look like a Fool,
For I must be plain,
All Tricks are in vain,
There's nothing can gain
The Thing you'd obtain,
But moving, and proving,
By Wedding, true Loving,
My lesson I learnt at School.

He. I'll do't by this Hand,
I've Houses, I've Land,
Estate too in good Free-hold,
My Dear, let us join,
It all shall be thine,
Besides a good Purse of Gold.

She. You make me to blush, now I vow,
Oh Lord, shall I too baulk my Cow,
But since the late Oath you have swore,
Your Soul shall not be,
In danger for me,
I'll rather agree,
Of two to make three,
We'll Wed, and we'll Bed,
There's no more to be said,
And I'll ne'er go a Milking more.

FLY, FLY FROM MY SIGHT. FLY FAR AWAY

(A Dialogue Sung at a Play, by a Eunuch Boy and a Girl, 1719)

She. Fly, fly from my sight, fly far away,
My scorn thou'lt only purchase by thy stay,
Away, away, away, fond Fool, away.
He. Dear, dear Angel to
Here on this place I'll rooted grow,
Those pretty, pretty Eyes,
Have charmed me so,
I cannot, cannot stir, I cannot, cannot go.
She. Thou Silly, silly creature be advised,
And do not stay to be despised;
By all my Actions, thou may'st see,
My Heart can spare no room for thee.
He. Why, why dost thou hate me, ah, confess
Thou sweet disposer of my Joys?
Why I can Kiss, and I can play,
And tell a thousand pretty tales;
Can Sing, can sing the livelong day,
If any other Talent fails.
She. Boast not thy Music, for I fear,
Thy singing Gift has cost thee dear;
Each warbling Linnet on the Tree
Has far a better Fate than thee:
For they Life's happy pleasures prove,
As they can sing, so they can Love.
He. Why so can I,
She. No, no, no poor Boy:
He. Why, why cannot I?
She. The reason is, I only guess
There's something in thy Face and Voice,
That thou'rt not made like other Boys,
No, no poor Boy.
He. Pray do but try, do but try, &c.
I know no reason, no reason why?
She. You know, you know, you know you Lie.

WOULD YE HAVE A YOUNG VIRGIN OF FIFTEEN YEARS

(A Song in the last Act of *The Modern Prophets*, 1719)

WOULD ye have a young Virgin of fifteen Years,
You must tickle her Fancy with sweets and dears,
Ever toying, and playing, and sweetly, sweetly,

Sing a Love Sonnet, and charm her Ears:
Wittily, prettily talk her down,
Chase her, and praise her, if fair or brown,
Sooth her, and smooth her,
And teaze her, and please her,
And touch but her Smicket, and all's your own.

Do ye fancy a Widow well known in a Man?
With a front of Assurance come boldly on,
Let her rest not an Hour, but briskly, briskly,
Put her in mind how her Time steals on;
Rattle and prattle although she frown,
Rowse her, and towse her from Morn to Noon,
Shew her some Hour y'are able to grapple,
Then get but her Writings, and all's your own.

Do ye fancy a Punk of a Humour free,
That's kept by a Fumbler of Quality,
You must rail at her Keeper, and tell her, tell her
Pleasure's best Charm is Variety,
Swear her much fairer than all the Town,
Try her, and ply her when Cully's gone,
Dog her, and jog her,
And meet her, and treat her,
And kiss with two Guinea's, and all's your own.

"IN A CELLAR AT SODOM"

(A Catch from *Pills to Purge Melancholy*, 1719)

IN a Cellar at Sodom, at the Sign of the T—,
Two Buxom young Harlots were drinking with L—;
Some say they were his Daughters, no matter for that,
They're resolved they would souse their old Dad with a Pot;
All flustered and bousie, the Doting old Sot,
As great as a Monarch between 'em was got;
Till the Eldest and Wisest thus opened the Plot,
Pray shew us dear Daddy how we were begot;
Godzoukes, you young Jades, 'twas the first Oath I wot,
The Devil of a Serpent this Humour has taught;
No matter, they cried, you shall Pawn for the shot,
Unless you will shew us how we were begot.

"A GENTLE BREEZE FROM THE LAVINIAN SEA"

(From *Pills to Purge Melancholy*, 1719)

A GENTLE Breeze from the Lavinian Sea,
Was gliding o'er the Coast of Sicily;
When lulled with soft Repose, a prostrate Maid,
Upon her bended Arm had raised her Head:
Her Soul was all tranquil and smooth with Rest,
Like the harmonious Slumbers of the Blest.
Wrapped up in Silence, innocent she lay,
And pressed the Flow'rs with Touch as soft as they.

My thoughts in gentless Sounds she did impart,
Heightened by all the Graces of that Art;
And as I sung, I grasped her yielding Thighs,
Till broken Accents faultered into Sighs:
I kissed and wished, and foraged all her store,
Yet wallowing in the Pleasure, I was poor;
No kind Relief my Agonies could ease,
I groaned, and cursed Religious Cruelties.

The trembling Nymph all o'er Confusion lay,
Her melting Looks in sweet Disorder play;
Hol Colour varies, and her Breath's oppressed,
And all her Faculties are dispossessed,
At last impetuously her Pulses move,
She gives a mighty Loose to stifled Love;
Then murmurs in a soft Complaint, and cries,
Alas! and thus in soft Convulsions dies.

"CELLADON, WHEN SPRING CAME ON"

(From *Pills to Purge Melancholy*, 1719)

CELLADON, when Spring came on,
Wooed Sylvia in a Grove,
Both gay and young, and still he sung
The sweet Delights of Love:
Wedded Joys in Girls and Boys,
And pretty Chat of this and that,
The honey kiss, and charming Bliss
That crowns the Marriage Bed;

He snatched her Hand, she blushed and fanned,
And seemed as if afraid.
Forbear, she cries, your fawning Lies,
I've vowed to die a Maid.

Celladon at that began
To talk of Apes in Hell,
And what was worse the odious Curse,
Of growing old and stale,
Loss of Bloom, when Wrinkles come,
And offers kind, when none will mind,
The rosie Joy, and sparkling Eye,
Grown faded and decayed,
At which when known, she changed her Tone,
And to the Shepherd said,
Dear Swain give o'er, I'll think once more,
Before I'll die a Maid.

"CELEMENE, PRAY TELL ME"

(From *Pills to Purge Melancholy* (1719), with music; set by Mr. Henry Purcell, sung by a Boy and Girl at the Playhouse)

He. Celemene, pray tell me,
Pray, pray tell me, Celemene,
When those pretty, pretty, pretty Eyes I see,
Why my Heart beats, beats, beats, beats in my Breast,
Why, why it will not, it will not, why, why, it will not let me rest:
Why this trembling, why this trembling too all o'er?
Pains I never, pains I never, never, never felt before:
And when thus I touch, when thus I touch your hand,
Why I wish, I wish, I wish, I was a Man?

She. How should I know more than you?
Yet would be a Woman too.
When you wash your self and play,
I methinks could look all day;
Nay, just now, nay, just now am pleased, am pleased so well,
Should you, should you kiss me, I won't tell,
Should you, should you kiss me, I won't tell:
No, no I won't tell, no, no I won't tell, no, no I won't tell.
Should you kiss me I won't tell.

He. Tho' I could do that all day,
And desire no better play:
Sure, sure in Love there's something more,
Which makes Mamma so big, so big before.
She. Once by chance I heard it named,
Don't ask what, don't ask what, for I'm ashamed:
Stay but till you're past Fifteen,
Then you'll know, then, then, you'll know what 'tis I mean.
Then you'll know what, then you'll know what 'tis I mean.
He. However, lose not present bliss,
But now we're alone, let's kiss:
But now we're alone let's kiss, let's kiss.
She. My breasts do so heave, so heave, so heave,
He. My Heart does so pant, pant, pant;
She. There's Something, something, something more we want,
There's Something, something, something more we want.

AN EPITHALAMIUM ON THE MARRIAGE OF THE HONOURABLE CHARLES LEIGH

(From *Pills to Purge Melancholy*, 1719)

DRAW, draw the Curtain, fie, make haste,
The panting Lovers long to be alone,
The precious Time no more in talking waste,
There's better Business going on;
Our Absence will their Wishes crown,
The next swift Moment's not too soon,
Our artful Song sounds like a Drone,
For now all Music, but their own,
Is harsh, and out of Tune.

Now Love inflames the Bridegroom's Heart,
How weak, how poor a Charmer is the Flute;
And when the Bride's fair Eyes her Wishes dart,
How dully sounds the warbling Lute.
If this Divine, harmonious Bliss
Attends each happy Marriage Day,
Who such a blessed State would miss,
And such a charming Tune as this,
Who would not learn to play?

Oh, Joy too fierce to be exprest,
  Thou sweet Atoner of Life's greatest Pain,
By thee are Men with Love's dear Treasure blest,
  And Women still by losing gain.
Smile then divine, propitious Pow'rs,
  Upon this Pair let Blessings flow,
Let Care mix with their Sweets, not Sours,
  But may succeeding Days and Hours
    Be charming all as now.

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN A TOWN SPARK AND HIS MISS

(From *Pills to Purge Melancholy*, 1719)

She. Did you not promise me when you lay by me,
  That you would marry me, can you deny me?
He. If I did promise thee, 'twas but to try thee,
  Call up your Witnesses, else I defie thee.

She. Ah, who would trust you men that swear and vow so,
  Born only to deceive, how can you do so?
He. If we can swear and lie, you can dissemble,
  And then to hear the Lie, would make one tremble.

She. Had I not loved, you had found a Denial,
  My tender Heart, alas, was but too real;
He. Should a new Shower increase the Flood,
  Too soon would overflow.

He. Real I know you were, I've often tried ye,
  Real to forty more Lovers beside me.
She. If thousanda lov'd me, where was my transgression,
  You were the only He, e'er got Possession?

He. Thou could'st talk prettily, e'er thou could'st go, Child:
  But I'm too old and wise to be shamed so, Child.
She. Tho' y'are so cruel you'll never believe me,
  You do but take the Child, all I forgive thee.
He. Send your Kid home to me, I will take care on't,
  If't has the Mother's Gifts, 'twill prove a rare one.

"TO CHARMING CAELIA'S ARMS I FLEW"

(From *Pills to Purge Melancholy*, 1719)

TO Charming Caelia's Arms I flew,
And there all Night I feasted,
No God such Transport ever knew,
Or Mortal ever tasted.

Lost in the sweet tumultuous Joy,
And bless'd beyond Expressing,
How can your Slave, my Fair, said I,
Reward so great a Blessing?

The whole Creation's Wealth survey,
O'er both the Indies wander,
Ask what bribed Senates give away,
And Fighting Monarchs squander.

The richest Spoils of Earth and Air,
The riffled Ocean's Treasure,
'Tis all too poor a Bribe by far,
To purchase so much Pleasure.

She blushing cried, my life, my Dear,
Since Caelia thus you Fancy,
Give her, but 'tis too much, I fear,
A rundlet of right Nantzy.

THE QUEEN OF MAY

(From *Pills to Purge Melancholy*, 1719)

UPON a time I chanced to walk along a Green,
Where pretty Lasses danced in strife to choose a Queen;
Some homely dressed, some handsome, some pretty, and some gay,
But who excelled in Dancing, must be the Queen of May.

From Morning till the Evening, their Controversy held,
And I, as Judge, stood gazing on, to Crown her that excelled;
At last when Phoebus Steeds had drawn their Wain away,
We found and crowned a Damsel to be the Queen of May.

Full well her Nature from her Face I did admire,
Her Habit well become her, altho' in poor Attire;
Her Carriage was so good, as did appear that Day,
That she was justly chosen to be the Queen of May.

Then all the rest in Sorrow, and she in sweet Content,
Gave over till the Morrow, and homewards straight they went;
But she of all the rest, was hindred by the way,
For ev'ry Youth that met her, must Kiss the Queen of May.

At last I caught and stayed her a while with me alone,
And on a Bank I laid her, when all the rest were gone;
She fearing some Mischance, cried out, forbear I pray,
Yet I could still do nothing but Kiss the Queen of May.

Thus we together tumbled at least an hour or more,
And like a Fool, I fumbled, as I had done before:
But when that Night was come, by chance I got the day,
And yet alas, did nothing else but Kiss the Queen of May.

Her thoughts of coming thither, both Grief and Joy begot,
She smiled and wept together, yet knew not well for what,
And still desired to go, but yet she seemed to stay,
Yet I alas did nothing else but Kiss the Queen of May.

She sighed and prayed for pity that I would once give o'er,
Yet were her Words so Witty, they showed she wished for more:
Then seeming to defend it, her Fort she did betray;
Yet I alas did nothing else but Kiss the Queen of May.

Thus shaking Hands at last we part, but she appeared
Both heavy Eyed and Hearted, with that she felt and feared;
Then turning round we parted, she speechless went her way,
Because I could do nothing but Kiss the Queen of May.

TO CHOOSE A FRIEND, BUT NEVER MARRY

(From *Pills to Purge Melancholy*, 1719)

TO all young Men that love to Woo,
To Kiss and Dance, and Tumble too;
Draw near and counsel take of me,
Your faithful Pilot I will be:
Kiss who you please, Joan, Kate, or Mary,
But still this Counsel with you carry,
Never Marry.

Court not a Country Lady, she
Knows not how to value thee;
She hath no am'rous Passion, but
What Tray, or Quando has for Slut:

To Lick, to Whine, to Frisk, or Cover,
She'll suffer thee, or any other,
Thus to Love her.

Her Daughter she's now come to Town,
In a rich Linsey Woolsey Gown;
About her Neck a valued Prize,
A Necklace made of Whitings Eyes:
With List for Garters 'bove her Knee,
And Breath that smells of Firmity,
'S not for thee.

Of Widows' Witchcrafts have a care,
For if they catch you in their Snare;
You must as daily Laborers do,
Be still a shoving with your Plow:
If any rest you do require,
They then deceive you of your Hire,
And retire.

The Maiden Ladies of the Town,
Are scarcely worth your throwing down;
For when you have possession got,
Or Venus Mark, or Honey-pot:
There's such a stir with, marry me,
That one would half forswear to see
Any she.

If that thy Fancy do desire,
A glorious out-side, rich Attire;
Come to the Court, and there you'll find,
Enough of such to Please your Mind:
But if you get too near their Lap,
You're sure to meet with a Mishap.

* * * * * * *

In fine, if thou delight'st to be,
Concern'd in Woman's Company:
Make it the Study of thy Life,
To find a Rich, young, handsome Wife:
That can with much discretion be
Dear to her Husband, kind to thee,
Secretly.

In such a Mistress, there's the Bliss,
Ten Thousand Joys wrapt in a Kiss;
And in th' Embraces of her Waist,
A Million more of Pleasures taste:
Who e'er would Marry that could be
Blest with such Opportunity,
Never me!

THE QUAKER'S SONG

(From *Pills to Purge Melancholy*, 1719)

AMONGST the pure ones all,
  Which Conscience doth profess;
And yet that sort of Conscience,
  Doth practice nothing less:
I mean the Sect of those Elect,
  That loath to live by Merit;
That leads their Lives with other Men's Wives,
  According unto the Spirit.

One met with a Holy Sister of ours,
  A Saint who dearly loved him:
And fain he would have kissed her,
  Because the Spirit moved him:
But she denied, and he replied,
  You're damned unless you do it;
Therefore consent, do not repent,
  For the Spirit doth move me to it.

She not willing to offend, poor Soul,
  Yielded unto his Motion;
And what these two did intend,
  Was out of pure Devotion;
To lie with a Friend and a Brother,
  She thought she should die no Sinner,
But e'er five Months were past,
  The Spirit was quick within her.

But what will the Wicked say,
  When they shall hear of this Rumour;
They'd laugh at us every Day,
  And Scoff us in every Corner:
Let 'em do so still if that they will,
  We mean not to follow their Fashion,
They're none of our Sect, nor of our Elect,
  Nor none of our Congregation.

But when the time was come,
  That she was to be laid;
It was no very great Crime,
  Committed by her they said:
'Cause they did know, and she did show,
  'Twas done by a friend and a Brother,
But a very great Sin they said it had been,
  If it had been done by another.

THE FASHIONABLE SHEPHERDESS

(From *Pills to Purge Melancholy*, 1719)

AT the break of morning light,
When the marbled Sky look gay;
Nature self all perfect bright,
Smiled to see the God of Day:
Charming prospect, verdant Trees,
Azure Hill, enamelled Sky;
Birds with warbling Throats to please,
Striving each which shall outvey.

Lisbea then with wond'rous haste,
O'er a green sword Plain she flew;
Thus my Angel as she past,
The Eyes of ev'ry Shepherd drew:
When they had the Nymph espied,
All amazed cried there she goes;
Thus by blooming Beauty tried,
Thought a second Sun arose.

Ev'ry Swain the Sun mistook,
Dazzled by refulgent Charms;
And with Joy their Flocks forsook,
For to follow Love's Alarms:
All till now were perfect Friends,
Bound by Innocence and Truth;
Till sly Love to gain his ends,
Made a difference 'twixt each Youth.

Each expected which should be,
Made the happy Man by Love;
While for want of Liberty,
None could truly happy prove;
But at length they all arriv'd,
To a charming easy Grove;
Where the Nymph had well contriv'd,
To be happy with her Love.

There in amorous folding twin'd,
Strephon with his Lisbea, lay;
Both to mutual Joys enclin'd,
Let their Inclinations stray:
As the curling Vines embracing,
Fondly of the Oak around;
So the blooming Nymph's caressing,
Of her Swain with pleasure crown'd.

How surpriz'd were e'ry Swain,
When they found the Nymph engaged;
Disappointment heightened Pain,
Till it made them more enraged:
Arm your self with Resolution,
Cried the most revengeful he;
We'll contrive her Swain's Confusion,
Let him fall as much as we.

Several Punishments they Invented,
For to Torture helpless he;
All revengeful, ne'er contented,
Cruel to a vast Degree:
One more envious in the rear,
Thus his Sentiments let slip;
Make him like the Cavalier,
And for the Opera him Equip.

THE WINCHESTER WEDDING

(From *Pills to Purge Melancholy*, 1719)

AT Winchester was a Wedding,
The like was never seen,
Twixt lusty Ralph of Redding,
And bonny black Bess of the Green:
The Fiddlers were Crowding before,
Each Lass was as fine as a Queen;
There was a Hundred and more,
For all the Country came in:
Brisk Robin led Rose so fair,
She looked like a Lilly o' the Vale;
And Ruddy Faced Harry led Mary,
And Roger led bouncing Nell

With Tommy came smiling Katy,
He helped her over the Stile;
And swore there was none so pretty,
In forty, and forty long Mile:
Kit gave a Green-Gown to Betty,
And lent her his Hand to rise;
But Jenny was jeered by Watty,
For looking blue under the Eyes:
Thus merrily Chatting all,
They passed to the Bride-house long;
With Johnny and pretty faced Nanny,
The fairest of all the throng.

The Bride came out to meet 'em,
  Afraid the Dinner was spoiled;
And ushered 'em in to treat 'em,
  With Baked, and Roasted, and Boiled:
The Lads were so frolic and jolly,
  For each had his Love by his side;
But Willy was Melancholy,
  For he had a Mind to the Bride:
Then Philip begins her Health,
  And turns a Beer Glass on his Thumb;
But Jenkin was reckoned for Drinking,
  The best in Christendom.

And now they had Din'd, advancing
  Into the midst of the Hall;
The Fiddlers struck up for Dancing,
  And Jeremy led up the Brawl:
But Margery kept a quarter,
  A Lass that was proud of her Pelf,
Cause Arthur had stolen her Garter,
  And swore he would tie it himself:
She struggled, and blushed, and frowned,
  And ready with Anger to cry;
'Cause Arthur with tying her Garter,
  Had slipped his Hand too high.

And now for throwing the Stocking,
  The Bride away was led;
The Bridegroom got Drunk and was knocking,
  For Candles to light 'em to Bed:
But Robin that found him Silly,
  Most friendly took him aside;
The while that his Wife with Willy,
  Was playing at Hoopers-hide;
And now the warm Game begins,
  The Critical Minute was come;
And chatting, and Billing, and Kissing,
  Went Merrily round the Room.

Pert Stephen was kind to Betty,
  And blith as a Bird in the Spring;
And Tommy was so to Katy,
  And Wedded her with a Rush Ring:
Sukey that Danc'd with the Cushion,
  An Hour from the Room had been gone;
And Barnaby knew by her Blushing,
  That some other Dance had been done:

And thus of Fifty fair Maids,
That came to the Wedding with Men;
Scarce Five of the Fifty was left ye,
That so did return again.

TOM AND DOLL

(From *Pills to Purge Melancholy*, 1719)

WHEN the Kine had given a Pail full,
And the Sheep came bleating home;
Doll who knew it would be healthful,
Went a walking with young Tom:
Hand in hand, Sir,
O'er the Land, Sir?
As they walked to and fro;
Tom made jolly Love to Dolly,
But was answer'd, No, no, no, no, no, &c.

Faith, says Tom, the time is fitting,
We shall never get the like;
You can never get from Knitting,
Whilst I'm digging in the Dike:
Now we're gone too,
And alone too,
No one by to see or know;
Come, come, Dolly, prithee shall I,
Still she answered, No, no, no, no, &c.

Fie upon you Men, quoth Dolly,
In what snares you'd make us fall;
You'll get nothing but the folly,
But I shall get the Devil and all:
Tom with sobs,
And some dry Bobs,
Cry'd, you're a fool to argue so;
Come, come, Dolly, shall I? shall I?
Still she answered, No, no, no, no, &c.

To the Tavern then he took her,
Wine to Love's a Friend confest
By the hand he often shook her,
And frank brimmers to the best, &c.
Doll grew warm,
And thought no harm;
Till after a brisk pint or two,
To what he said the silly Maid,
Could hardly bring out, No, no, no, no, etc.

She swore he was the prettiest Fellow
  In the Country or the Town,
And began to grow so mellow,
  On the Couch he laid her down;
    Tom came to her,
    For to woo her
Thinking this the time to try:
  Something past so kind at last,
Her no was chang'd to I, I, I, I, I, I, &c.

Closely then they join'd their Faces,
  Lovers you know what I mean;
Nor could she hinder his Embraces,
  Love was now too far got in;
    Both now lying,
    Panting, dying,
Calms succeed the stormy Joy,
  Tom would fain renew't again,
And She consents with I, I, I, I, I, I, &c.

THE JILTS

(From *Pills to Purge Melancholy*, 1719)

ON a Bank in Flowry June,
  When Groves are green and gay,
In a smiling Afternoon,
  With Doll young Willy lay:
They thought none were to spy 'em,
But Nell stood list'ning by 'em;
  Oh fie! Doll cried, no, I vow, I'd rather die;
Than wrong my Modesty:
Quoth Nell, that I shall see.

Smarting pain the Virgin finds,
  Although by Nature taught,
When she first to Man inclines;
  Quoth Nell I'll venture that.
Then who would loose a Treasure
For such a puny Pleasure?
  Not I, not I, no, a Maid I'll live and die,
And to my Vow be true:
Quoth Nell, the more fool you.

To my Closet I'll repair,
  And Godly Books peruse;
Then devote my self to Pray'r,
  Quoth Nell, and—— use;
You Men are all perfidious,
But I will be Religious.
  Try all, fly all, whil'st I have Breath deny ye all,
For the Sex I now despise:
  Quoth Nell, and —— use;

Youthful Blood o'erspreads her Face,
  When Nature prompts to Sin:
Modesty ebbs out apace,
  And love as fast flows in:
The Swain that heard this schooling,
Ashamed, left off his fooling;
  Kill me, kill me, now I am ruined, let me die:
You have damned my Soul to Hell;
Try her once again, cries Nell.

SIT DOWN, MY DEAR SYLVIA

(From *Pills to Purge Melancholy*, 1719)

Alexis. Sit down my dear Sylvia,
  And then tell me, tell me true,
When we the fierce pleasure of Passion first knew;
What Senses were charmed,
And what Raptures did dwell,
Within thy fond Heart, my dear Nymph, prithee tell!
That when thy Delights in their fulness are known,
I may have the joy to relate all my own.

Sylvia. Oh fie, my Alexis!
How dare you propose,
To me, silly Girl, things immodest as those!
Nice Candor and Modesty glow in my Breast,
Whose Virtue can utter no Words so unchaste;
But if your impatience admits no delay,
Describe your own Raptures,
And teach me the way.

Alexis. A pain mixed with Pleasure my Senses first found,
When crowds of Delight strait my Heart did surround;
A Joy so transporting, I sighed when it was done:
And fain would renew, but alas! all was gone;
Coy nature was treacherous, when first she meant,
A Treasure so precious so soon should be spent.

Sylvia. This free kind Confession does so much prevail,
That I in your bosom would blush out my Tale;
But Dearest, you know, 'tis too much to declare,
The Joys that our Souls, when united, do share.
Let this then suffice, if the Pleasure could last,
A Saint would leave Heaven, still so to be blest.

WALKING DOWN THE HIGHLAND TOWN

(A New Scotch Song from Pills to Purge Melancholy, 1719)

WALKING down the Highland Town,
There I saw Lasses many;
But upon the Bank in the highest Rank,
Was one more gay than any:
I Look'd about for one kind Face,
And I saw Billy Scrogy;
I asked of him what her Name,
They call'd her Catherine Logy.

I travelled east, and I travelled west,
And I travelled through Strabogy;
But the fairest Lass that e'er I see,
Was pretty Catherine Logy.

I travelled east, and I travelled west,
And Travel'd through Strabogy;
But I'd watch a long Winter's Night,
To see fair Catherine Logy.

I've a Love in Lamermoor,
A dainty Love in Leith, Sir;
And another Love in Edinborough,
And twa Loves in Dalkeith, Sir.

Ride I east, or Ride I west,
My Love she's still before me,
But gin my Wife shou'd ken aw this,
I should be very sorry.

AS I SAT AT MY SPINNING-WHEEL

(A Song from *Pills to Purge Melancholy*, 1719)

AS I sat at my Spinning-Wheel,
A bonny Lad there passed by,
I kenned him round, and I liked him weel,
Geud Feth he had a bonny Eye:
My Heart new panting, 'gan to feel,
But still I turned my Spinning-Wheel.

Most gracefully he did appear,
As he my Presence did draw near,
And round about my slender waist
He clasped his Arms, and me embraced:
To kiss my Hand he down did kneel,
As I sat at my Spinning-Wheel.

My Milk white hand he did extol,
And praised my Fingers long and small,
And said, there was no Lady fair,
That ever could with me compare:
Those pleasing Words my Heart did feel,
But still I turned my Spinning-Wheel.

Altho' I seemingly did chide,
Yet he would never be denied,
But did declare his Love the more,
Until my Heart was Wounded sore;
That I my Love could scarce conceal,
But yet I turned my Spinning-Wheel.

As for my Yarn, my Rock and Reel,
And after that my Spinning-Wheel,
He bid me leave them all with Speed
And gang with him yonder Mead:
My panting Heart strange Flames did feel,
Yet still I turned my Spinning-Wheel.

He stopped and gazed, and blithely said,
Now Speed the Wheel, my bonny Maid,
But if thou'st to the Hay-Cock go,
I'll learn thee better Work I trow,
Geud Feth, I lik'd him passing weel,
But still I turned my Spinning-Wheel.

He lowly veiled his Bonnet oft,
And sweetly kist my Lips so soft;

Yet still between each Honey Kiss,
He urged me on to farther Bliss:
'Till I resistless Fire did feel,
Then let alone my Spinning-Wheel.

Among the pleasant Cocks of Hay,
Then with my bonny Lad I lay,
What Damsel ever could deny,
A Youth with such a Charming Eye?
The Pleasure I cannot reveal,
It far surpast the Spinning-Wheel.

THE SURPRIS'D NYMPH

(From *Pills to Purge Melancholy, 1719*)

THE four and twentieth day of May,
Of all days in the year;
A Virgin Lady fresh and gay,
Did privately appear:
Hard by a River side got she,
And did sing loud the rather;
Cause she was sure, she was secure,
And had intent to bathe her.

With glittering, glancing, jealous Eyes,
She slyly looks about;
To see if any lurking Spies
Were hid to find her out
And being well resolved that none,
Could see her Nakedness,
She pulled her Robes off one by one,
And did her self undress.

Her purple Mantle fring'd with Gold,
Her Ivory Hands unpinned;
It would have made a Coward bold,
Or tempted a Saint to 'a sinned
She turned about and looked around,
Quoth she, I hope I'm safe;
Then her rosie Petticoat,
She presently put off.

The snow white Smock which she had on,
Transparently to deck her,
Look'd like Cambric or Lawn,
Upon an Alabaster Picture:

Thro' which Array I did faintly spy
  Her Belly and her Back;
Her Limbs were straight, and all was white,
  But that which should be Black.

Into a fluent Stream she leapt,
  She looked like Venus Glass;
The Fishes from all Quarters crept,
  To see what Angel 'twas:
She did so like a Vision look,
  Or Fancy in a ream;
'Twas thought the Sun the Skies forsook,
  And dropt into the Stream.

Each Fish did wish himself a Man,
  About her all was drawn,
And at the Sight of her began
  To spread abroad their Spawn:
She turned to swim upon her Back,
  And so display'd her Banner;
If Jove had then in Heaven been,
  He would have dropt upon her.

A Lad that long her Love had been,
  And could obtain no Grace,
For all her prying lay unseen,
  Hid in a secret place:
Who had often been repuls'd,
  When he did come to Woo her;
Pulled off his cloaths, and furiously
  Did run and leap into her.

She squeaked, she cried, and down she dived,
  He brought her up again;
He brought o'er upon the Shore,
  And then—and then—and then—
As Adam did Old Eve enjoy,
  You may guess what I mean;
Because she all uncovered lay,
  He covered her again.

With watered Eyes she pants and cries,
  I'm utterly undone;
If you will not be wed to me,
  E'er the next Morning Sun:
He answered her he ne'er would stir,
  Out of her Sight till then;
We'll both clasp Hands in Wedlock Bands,
  Marry, and to't again.

AS I WALKED IN THE WOODS ONE EVENING OF LATE

(A Song from *Pills to Purge Melancholy*, 1719)

AS I walked in the Woods one Evening of late,
A Lass was deploring her hapless Estate;
In a Languishing posture, poor Maid she appears,
All swelled with her sighs, and blubbered with her Tears:
She Cried and she sobbed, and I found it was all,
For a little of that which Harry gave Doll.

At last she broke out, Wretched, she said,
Will not Youth come succour a languishing Maid,
With what he with ease and pleasure may give,
Without which alas, poor I cannot live!
Shall I never leave Sighing, and Crying and Call,
For a little of that which Harry gave Doll.

At first when I saw a young Man in the place,
My Colour would fade, and then flush in my Face;
My Breath it grew short, and I shivered all o'er,
My Breast never Popp'd up and down so before:
I scarce knew for what, but now I find it was all,
For a little of that which Harry gave Doll.

RANGING THE PLAIN ONE SUMMER'S NIGHT

(A Song from *Pills to Purge Melancholy*, 1719)

RANGING the Plain one Summer's night,
To pass a vacant hour,
I fortunately chanced to light,
On lovely Phillis Bow'r,
The Nymph adorn'd with thousand Charms,
In expectation sate,
To meet those Joys in Strephon's Arms,
Which Tongue cannot relate.

Upon her Hand she leaned her Head,
Her breast did gently rise;
That ev'ry Lover might have read,
Her Wishes in her Eyes;
At ev'ry Breath that moved the Trees,
She suddenly would start;
A cold on all her Body seized,
A trembling on her Heart.

But he that knew how well she Loved,
Beyond this hour has stay'd;
And both with Fear and Anger moved,
The melancholy Maid:
Ye Gods, she said, how oft he swore,
He would be here by One;
But now alas! 'tis Six and more,
And yet he is not come.

THE DANGER IS OVER, THE BATTLE IS PAST

(A Song from *Pills to Purge Melancholy*)

THE Danger is over, the Battle is past,
The Nymph had her fears, but she ventured at last;
She tried the Encounter, and when it was done;
She smiled at her Folly, and owned she had won;
By her Eyes we discover, the Bride has been pleas'd,
Her Blushes become her, her Passion is eased;
She dissembles her joy, and affects to look down,
If she sighs, 'tis for sorrow 'tis ended so soon.

Appear all you Virgins, both Aged and Young,
All you, who have carried that burden too long;
Who have lost precious time, and you who are loosing,
Betrayed by your fears between doubting and choosing;
Draw nearer, and learn what will settle your mind,
You'll find your selves happy, when once you are kind;
Do but wisely resolve the sweet venture to run,
You'd feel the loss little, and much to be won.

THE CUMBERLAND LASS

(From *Pills to Purge Melancholy*, 1719)

THERE was a Lass in Cumberland,
A bonny Lass of high Degree:
There was a Lass, her Name was Nell,
The blithest Lass that e'er you see:
Oh! to Bed to me, to Bed to me,
The Lass that comes to Bed to me:
Blith and bonny may she be,
The Lass that comes to Bed to me.

Her Father lov'd her passing well,
So did her Brother fancy Nell;
But all their Loves came short of mine,
As far as Tweed is from the Tyne.

She had five Dollars in a Chest,
Four of them she gave to me;
She cut her Mother's Winding-Sheet,
And all to make a sark for me.

She plucked a Box out of her Purse,
Of four Gold Rings she gave me three;
She thought herself no whit the worse,
She was so very kind to me,

If I were Lord of all the North,
To Bed and Board she should be free,
For why, she is the bonniest Lass,
That is in all her own Country,

Her Cherry-Cheeks and Ruby Lips,
Doth with the Damask Rose agree,
With other Parts which I'll not Name,
Which are so pleasing unto me:

For I have rid both East and West,
And been in many a strange Country,
Yet never met with so kind a Lass,
Compared with Cumberland Nelly.

When I embrace her in my Arms,
She takes it kind and courteously,
And hath such pretty winning Charms,
The like whereof you ne'er did see:

There's not a Lass in Cumberland
To be compared to smiling Nell,
She hath so soft and white a Hand,
And something more that I'll not tell,

Up to my Chamber I her got,
There I did treat her courteously,
I told her, I thought it was her Lot
To stay all night and Lig with me,

She, pretty Rogue, could not say nay,
But by consent we did agree,
That she for a fancy, there should stay,
And come at night to Bed to me:

She made the Bed both broad and wide,
And with her Hand she smoothed it down;
She kissed me thrice, and smiling said,
My Love, I fear thou wilt sleep too soon:

Into my Bed I hasted strait,
And presently she followed me,
It was in vain to make her wait,
For a Bargain must a Bargain be,

Then I embraced this lovely Lass,
And strok'd her Wem so bonnily,
But for the rest we'll let it pass,
For she afterward sung Lullaby;
Oh! to Bed to me, to Bed to me,
The Lass that came to Bed to me,
Blith and Bonny sure was she,
The Lass that came to Bed to me.

SYLVIA A MAY ROVING

(A Broadside Song with music, c. 1720)

CURIOSITY made Sylvia Seek the various Flowers of May
When Spring the op'ning Buds does break in Blossoms sweet and Gay.
Her pleased and lovely Eyes intent, a Beautious Bank Espied,
Where Curious nature Chiefly meant to Manifest her Pride.

Hard by the Brooks and murmuring stream,
The Silver Current Plaid,
And Phoebus with his brightest Beams.
The Morning had arrayed,
The whispering Zephyrs gently blow,
A cool and Pleasant Breeze,
To shake the Clust'ring pearly Dews
From off the verdant Trees.

Delighted was the Rural Maid,
And did her Joys Express,
To see each Meadow and each glade,
Adorned in such a dress,
Her snowy Fingers called and wrest,
The Flowers of the Mead,
To make a Posie for her Brest,
That did their sweets exceed.

But Musing as she walked along,
She heard with great Surprise,
Soft accents break in to a Song,
But where could not devise,

She cast her beamy Eyes around,
  And thought that from the Shade,
Proceeded the Harmonious sound,
  That did her ease invade.

The melting voice did please so well
  That unalarmed by fear,
Down on a Flow'ry Bank she fell
  And lent her Ravished Ear,
O Love, O Nature, then she cried,
  What Strength can Woman boast
When you much Greater do provide,
  That we may quite be lost.

At this young Strephon strait appear'd.
  How Great was then her Joy,
How Small, how careless was the fear
  This did her Breast imploy,
He wond'ring saw her Case was such,
  To Blush and then turn Pale,
But then he ailed himself too much,
  To ask what She did ail.

Confused he Pressed her in his Arms
  She knew not what he did,
She gave up all her Virgin Charms,
  And nothing could forbid,
To Gather Flowers the pretty Maid,
  Came Innocently Thither,
Tho' some malicious Tongues have said,
  'Twas to be Gathered rather.

BEAUTY AND DESIRE

(A Broadside Song with music, c. 1720)

ALL the materials are the same,
  Of Beauty and Desire,
In fair Woman's Goodly Frame
No Brightness is without a Flame;
  No Flame without a Fire.
Then tell me what those Creatures are
Who would be thought both Chaste and Fair.

If on her Neck her Hair be spread,
  With many a curious Ring;
That Heat, which serves to curl her Head
Will make her mad to be abed
  And do another Thing.

If Modesty itself appear
  With Blushes in her Face,
Think you the Blood that dances there,
Can revel it no other where?
  Or warm no other Place?

And but of her Philosophy,
  What gives her Lips the Balm?
What makes her Breasts to heave so high?
What spirits give Motion to her Eye,
  And moisture to her palm?

Then, Celia, be not coy, for that
  Betrays thyself and thee;
There's not a Beauty nor a Grace,
  But pleads within for me.
Then tell me what those Women are
Who would be thought both Chaste and Fair.

THE JOLLY YOUNG SWAIN

(A Broadside Song with music, c. 1720)

A NYMPH of the Plain
  By a Jolly Young Swain,
Was addressed to be kind;
But relentless I find
To his Prayers she appeared,
Tho' himself he endeared
  In a manner so soft,
  So engaging, so sweet,
  As soon might persuade
  Her his Passion to meet.

How much he ador'd her,
How oft he implor'd her,
I cannot express;
But he loved to excess,
And he swore he should die,
Unless she would comply
  In a manner, &c.

While blushes like Roses,
That nature composes,
Vermilioned her Face,
With an Air and a grace,
Which her Lover improved,
When he found he had moved
  In a manner, &c.

When waked from the Joy,
Which their Souls did employ,
From her Sweet ruby Lips,
Thousand odorous sips;
Then amazed at her Eyes,
Says he faints and he dies
In a manner, &c.

But how they should part,
Now became all their smart,
Till he vowed to his fair,
That to ease his own care,
He would meet her again,
And till then be in pain
In a manner, &c.

"AS JOCKEY AND JENNY TOGETHER WAS LAID"

(A Broadside Song with music, c. 1720)

AS Jockey and Jenny together was laid,
Jockey was happy, no less seemed the Maid,
She often did Sigh, and cried, Jockey with thee
My life tho' in Bondage would seem to be free.
Jockey for Jenny who often did Burn,
Did Sigh to her Sighs and kind Language return,
There's no Pair so happy so much of one Mind,
As Jockey to Jenny to Jenny inclined.

Content with each other in humble retreat,
They court not new Beauties, nor envy the great;
He'll not quit his Nymph, nor the Nymph quit her swain,
For Pleasures yet thought of, or Riches to gain.
Come all you gay Courtiers who greatness admire,
And shine in gilt Coaches with pompous attire,
Regard the true pleasure this couple enjoys,
For Jockey to Jenny to Jenny ne'er cloys.

While you quit your Silvia for Cloe's bright eyes,
Aminta persue, you fair Cloe despise,
When one Nymph's undone you another undo,
And rambling the Fair does the same thing by you,
Till Nature grows weary, decrepid, and poor,
Not aged, but quite has exhausted her store,
'Tis Jockey and Jenny the true taste,
Be constant like us and your pleasures will last.

"AS I WAS WALKING, I HEARD A MAID TALKING"

(A Broadside Song with music; the words by Mr. Estcourt, c. 1720)

AS I was walking, I heard a Maid talking,
Oh I could, how I could, oh I could, now I could,
As I was walking, I heard a Maid talking,
Oh I could do it with Pleasure:
Tall was her shape, she tripped like a Fairy.
Up and down, ripe and Brown,
Sprightly and Airy:
Advancing I called her my life and my Treasure,
Pray Sir forbear, I don't know what you mean.
Pretty lass I am afraid
That thou wilt die a Maid.
Oh that's a sad Case, said She,
Pray Sir how can that be
Now you and I are together?
Prithee, come into the Grove,
The prettiest place for Love,
There we'll Act between us Adonis and Venus,
No, no, Sir, not so hasty Neither.

Clasping her waist, I kissed her in haste,
I hugged her, I tugged her, I lugged her, I mou'd her,
I made her Cheeks glow, and I Nuzzled her Breast,
I was for taking the Fort of Monjoy.
Leaning upon my Arms sighing and panting,
Oh my dear, nay my dear, fy my dear, pray my dear,
Nature did never disclose such pleasure.
She looked like the Queen of Love, I like her Boy,
In this dear Confusion Blest, the pretty Rouge fell down,
Guess if you can the Sight,
'Twas such a dear delight,
I Blest the time that I met her,
Watching like an Engineer, what Breach was in the town,
Rusled upon her,
And once or twice won her,
And both of us parted much better.

"SAYS DICKY TO DOLLY, I LOVE THEE SO WELL"

(From *The Virgin Sacrifice;* (c. 1720); set by Mr. Turner)

SAYS Dicky to Dolly, I love thee so well,
That I'll teach thee more wit than to lead Apes in Hell,
Then Honey, quothe he,
If mine thou wilt be,
No longer deny me,
But come and sit by me;
My Lambs and my Kids, my Cattle and Kine,
My Pigs and my Sow, and my all shall be thine.

What tho' I can't keep thee a Coach and a Chaise,
Nor dress thee in Silk, but plain Russet and Frieze,
I'll give thee the Joys,
Of Sweet Girls and Boys;
Let Knights, Lords and Ladies
Boast their half gotten Babies,
Not puny young Squire, nor Miss in her Pride,
Can match the Stout Bantlings by a Country fire Side.

Tho' waked with the Lark, I cant lie till Noon,
By my Puggy's dear Side like ye drones of the Town,
Ne'er fear my sweet Joy,
The Jolly brisk Boy,
When merrily Jogging,
Home to the Brown Noggin,
Thou from milking the cows, and I from the Plough,
We'el laugh and we'el frolic, upon the Hay-Mow.

Thus heartily wooed, by her Dicky so stout,
The melting poor Thing, could no longer hold out,
But tickled and pleased
Her fancy so raised,
She heaved, and She panted
For Something She wanted;
Whilst to hear her dear Dick such a brisk Lad of Mettle,
She Simpered and smil'd like a Furmity Kettle.

JOHN AND NELL

(A Broadside Song with music, c. 1720)

AS Nell sate underneath her Cow
Upon a Cock of Hay,
Brisk John was coming from his Plough,
And chanced to pass that way.

Like Light'ning to the Maid he flew,
And by the hand he squeezed her,
Pray John, she cried, be quiet, Do,
And frowned because he teized her.

Cupid from his Mother's knee,
Observed her female Pride.
Go on and prosper John (says he),
And I will be your Guide,
Then aimed at Nelly's breast a dart,
From Pride it soon released her,
She faintly cried, I feel love's smart,
And sighed because it eased her.

John laid himself down by her side,
And stole a kiss or two,
And Flatt'ry's Charm he also tried,
'Till she the kinder grew,
The Poison soon began to spread,
And in the Nick he seized her,
She trembled, blushed, and hung her head,
Then smiled—because he pleased her.

THE BASHFUL MAID

(A Broadside Song with music, c. 1720)

MUCH I love a charming Creature,
But the Flame with which I burn,
Is not for each tender Feature,
Nor her wit nor sprightly turn,
But for her down a down down, down derry,
Hey down down a down derry down.

On the Grass I saw her Lying,
Strait I seized her tender waist,
On her Back she lay complying,
With her lovely Body placed,
Under my down a down down, down derry, &c.

But the Nymph being young and tender,
Could not bear the dreadful smart,
Still unwilling to surrender,
Called Mamma to take the part,
Of her down a down down, down derry, &c.

Out of breath Mamma came Running,
To prevent poor Nancy's Fate,
But the Girl now grown more cunning,
Cried, Mamma you're come too late,
For I am down a down down, down a,
For I am down, a down derry down.

THE SCHOOLMASTER'S LESSON

(A Broadside Song with music, c. 1720)

I WILL fly into your Arms,
And Smother you with kisses,
I will rifle all your Charms,
And teach you Am'rous blisses,
For it is my Concern,
And a means that you should learn,
The Pranks of other Misses.

Don't be coy when I invade,
And kindly yield the Blessing,
For it is high time your Maidenhead
Were in my Possession,
Don't cry out and be a Fool,
For if that you come to School
You must peruse your Lesson.

Open then the Books, my dear,
The Leaves shall be separated,
All things that comprehensive are,
Shall soon be penetrated.
Lessons three she had that Night,
Taking pleasure with delight,
She begged for more next Morning.

Lovely master try again,
Don't so soon forsake me,
For to learn I am in Pain
Till you a Scholar make me,
Such pretty pretty Things you show
The more you teach the more I'd know,
For now the Fit does take me.

Never Master pleas'd me more,
To such great Perfection,
And of all the schools I'm sure,
Kind is your Correction,

For whene'er you give the same
Never a Scholar can you blame,
'Tis done with such affection.

Open then my Leaves so Fair,
And kindly to me show, Sir,
What knowledge is, how sweet, how rare,
And what I long to know, Sir,
Cupid tells me very Plain,
That your learning is not vain,
But useful as his Bow, Sir.

When he was departing then,
She said with kind Expression,
When will you, pray Sir, come again,
And teach me t'other Lesson.
He reply'd with great delight,
My dear, I'll come but ev'ry Night,
And think it as a Blessing.

Thus each Night he do(e)s repair
To tell her of her Duty,
While He's taken in the snare
Shot to the Hearth by Cupid,
When the School master is Love,
Then the Scholars kinder prove
For Love is Kin to Beauty.

THE SILENT FLUTE

(Broadside song with music: in *Musical Miscellany*, 1729)

AS Damon late with Cloe sat,
They talked of am'rous Blisses;
Kind things he said, which she repaid,
In pleasing Smiles and Kisses.
With tuneful Tongue of Love he sung;
She thanked him for his Ditty,
But said one Day she heard him say,
The Flute was mighty pretty.

Young Damon, who her Meaning knew,
Took out his Pipe to charm her;
And while he strove, with wanton Love,
And sprightly Airs, to warm her;
She begged the Swain to play one Strain,
In all the softest Measure,
Whose Killing Sound would sweetly wound,
And make her die with Pleasure.

Eager to do't, he takes the Flute,
And ev'ry Accent traces,
Love trickling thro' his Fingers flew,
And whispered melting Graces:
He did his Part with wond'rous Art,
Expecting Praises after;
But she instead of falling dead,
Burst out into a Laughter.

Taking the Hint, as Cloe meant,
Said he, My Dear, be easy;
I have a Flute, which, tho' 'tis mute,
May play a Tune to please ye:
Then down he laid the charming Maid,
He found her kind and willing;
He played again, and tho' each Strain
Was silent, yet 'twas Killing.

Fair Cloe soon approved the Tune,
And vowed he played divinely;
Let's have it o'er, said she, once more,
It goes exceeding finely:
The Flute is good, that's made of Wood,
And is, I own, the neatest;
Yet ne'ertheless, I must confess,
The silent Flute's the sweetest.

"A YOUNG MAN AND A MAID"

(From *Pills to Purge Melancholy*, 1720)

A YOUNG Man and a Maid, put in all, put in all,
Together lately played, put in all;
The Young Man was in Jest,
O the Maid she did protest:
She bid him do his best, put in all, put in all.

With that her rolling Eyes, put in all, put in all,
Turned upward to the Skies, put in all;
My Skin is White you see,
My Smock above my Knee,
What would you more of me, put in all, put in all.

I hope my Neck and Breast, put in all, put in all,
Lie open to your chest, put in all,
The Young Man was in heat,
The Maid did soundly Sweat,
A little farther get, put in all, put in all.

According to her Will, put in all, put in all,
This Young Man try'd his Skill, put in all;
But the Proverb plain does tell,
That use them ne'er so well,
For an Inch they'd take an Ell, put in all, put in all.

When they had ended sport, put in all, put in all,
She found him all too short, put in all;
For when he'd done his best,
The Maid she did protest,
'Twas nothing but a Jest, put in all, put in all.

YOUNG STREPHON AND PHILLIS

(From *Pills to Purge Melancholy* (1720), vi. 220)

YOUNG Strephon and Phillis,
They sat on a Hill;
But the Shepherd was wanton,
And would not sit still:
His Head on her Bosom,
And Arms round her Waist;
He Hugged her, and kissed her,
And clasped her so fast:
Till playing and jumbling,
At last they fell tumbling;
And down they got 'em,
But oh! they fell soft on the Grass at the Bottom.

As the Shepherdess tumbled,
The rude Wind got in,
And blew up her Clothes,
And her Smock to her Chin:
The Shepherd he saw
The bright Venus, he swore,
For he knew her own Dove,
By the Feathers she wore:
Till furious Love sallying,
At last he fell dallying,
And won, down he got him,
But oh! oh! how sweet, and how soft at the Bottom.

The Shepherdess blushing,
To think what she'd done;
Away from the Shepherd,
She fain would have run;
Which Strephon perceiving,

The wand'rer did seize;
And cried do be angry,
Fair Nymph if you please:
'Tis too late to be cruel,
Thy Frowns my dear Jewel,
Now no more Stings have got 'em,
For oh! Thou'rt all kind, and all soft at the Bottom.

ON FRUITION

(By Sir Charles Sedley, 1722)

NONE, but a Muse in love, can tell
The sweet tumultuous joys I feel,
When on Celia's breast I lie.
When I tremble, faint, and die;
Mingling kisses with embraces,
Darting tongues, and joining faces,
Panting, stretching, sweating, cooing,
All in the ecstasy of doing.

AN EPIGRAM TO FLAVIA

(By Sir Charles Sedley, 1722)

WHEN to thy husband thou didst first refuse
The lawful pleasures of thy charming bed.
Men did his pipe and pot, and whores accuse;
On his mere lewdness the whole fault we laid:
Into thy house thou tookest a deep Divine
And all thy neighbours flocked to hear him preach:
The cheated world did in thy praises join,
The wise sort yet knew thy wanton reach,
From Sunday's crowds thou didst thy gallants choose,
And when they failed thee, good Doctors use.

TO BASSA

(By Sir Charles Sedley, 1722)

THAT I ne'er saw thee in a coach with man,
Nor thy chaste name in wanton satire met
That from thy sex thy liking never ran,
So as to suffer a male-servant yet,

I thought thee, the Lucretia of our time:
  But, Bassa, thou the while a Tribas wert,
And clashing ——, with a prodigious crime,
  Didst act of man the inimitable part,
What Œdipus this riddle can untie?
Without a male, there was adultery.

THE FORWARD LOVE

(By Sir Charles Sedley, 1722)

TUSH! never tell me I'm too young
  For loving, or too green;
She stays at least seven years too long,
  That's wedded at Eighteen.
Lambs bring forth Lambs, and Doves bring Doves,
  As soon they've begotten.
Then why should ladies linger loves,
  As if not ripe till rotten?

Grey hairs are fitter for the Grave
  Than for the Bridal bed:
What pleasure can a lover have
  In a withered maidenhead?
Nature's exalted in our time,
  And what our Grandames then
At four and twenty scarce could climb,
  We can arrive at ten.

THE ENJOYMENT

(Anonymous. From *Miscellany Poems*, 1709)

YE Gods! the raptures of that night!
  What fierce convulsions of delight!
How in each other's arms involv'd,
We lay confounded, and dissolved!
Bodies mingling, sexes blending,
Which should most be lost contending,
Darting fierce and flaming kisses,
Plunging into boundless blisses;
Our bodies, and our souls on fire.
Tost by a tempest of Desire;
Till with utmost fury driven,
Down, at once, we sunk to heaven.

"THE NIGHT IS COME THAT WILL ALLOW"

(From *Pills to Purge Melancholy*, 1720)

THE Night is come that will allow,
No longer any Coyness now,
But every freedom must to Love be given;
What tho' the Shadows of the Night,
Withdraw her Beauty from his sight,
The Youth another way, another way,
Another way will find his Heaven.

See, see the charming Nymph is laid,
Never again to rise a Maid,
The vigorous Bridegroom now impatient grown;
Thrown himself by her side,
With eager Joy, and amourous Pride,
Ready to seize the Prey that's now his own.

And now that all have left the Place,
Transporting Joys crowd on space,
The Nymph contends like one that would not win;
Entrained with Pleasure now she lies,
The Youth has gained the noble Prize,
And now her Fears are past, and Joys begin.

SALLY'S SWEETBREAD'S SOLILOQUY

(By Henry Carey; sung by Mrs. Roberts in the character of a Butcher's Wife).

NOW ye good man's from home,
I would cast away care;
And with some brisk Fellow,
Steal out to the Fair;
But some are too bashful,
And others too bold
And Women's intentions,
Are not to be told.

But could I once meet
With a Spark to my mind,
One fit to be trusted,
I then might prove kind;
With him I'd steal out
And we'd range the Fair round,
Both eating and drinking
The best could be found.

O there I should see
All the Gentlemen Rakes,
And hear the sweet cry
Of Bear, Ale, Wine and Cakes;
While I in blue Apron
And clean Linen Gown;
Do allure the fine Sparks
From the Flirts of the Town.

There's Fielding and Oates,
And there's Bullock and Hall
A Pinchbeck and Fawks
And the Devil and all:
I'd have the best places,
I'd see ev'ry Sight;
And wanton in pleasure,
From Morning till Night.

Then home got secure
E'er my Husband comes back,
And cry most demure
"What d'ye buy, what d'ye lack?"
What tho' I've been cheery,
Gallanted, and kissed?
No harm to my Deary,
If nothing is missed.

THE DISAPPOINTED MAID

(By William Pattison. From *Poetical Works*, 1728)

AS Dolly and her favourite Swain
Were interrupted by the rain,
From tedding out the fragrant hay;
Beneath a sheltering cock they lay:
When thus the lovely, longing jade,
Unto the drowsy shepherd said,
Nay, prithee Lobby, why so sleepy?
Indeed, upon my word I'll nip ye.—
How pretty might we sit and chat,
Tell o'er old stories, and all that.—
But you—O Lord, the careless beast!
As if folks lie down to take rest.
Lob, half asleep, made no replies,
Or answered with a grunt her sighs.
While she to be revenged, arose,
And played a tickler on his nose.

(But come, the virgin to disgrace,
Will say, 'twas in another place.)
Be that—as 'twill, she waked the swain,
And tickled him with words again.
Come sweeting, Lobby, come my dear,
I'm sure that nobody is near;
Indeed we may, pray be'n't afraid,
Poor I am, but an harmless maid.
For since you're so disposed to rest,
Pray take a nap upon my breast.
You see time, leisure, place, and all
For such enjoyment seem to call.
And you remember people say,
When the sun shines, then make your hay.
Augh! augh! quoth Lob, waked with surprise,
To see the sun flame in his eyes.
Heigh Hoa! come Doll, for as you say.
The sun shines, we must make our hay:
So reach me there my rake and prong,
'Twas well you waked—we've slept too long.

THE ENJOYMENT

(By William Pattison. From *Poetical Works*, 1728)

COME my Laura, come my love;
Come my tender turtle-dove;
Let me from this host retire,
To languish in a softer fire,
How the waving elms invite us!
How the rosy bowers delight us!
How their am'rous foldings twine,
To imitate thy arms and mine!
See these snowy lilies blowing,
With the blushing roses glowing,
Silently the soul inspire,
To kindle at thy lover's fire:
See these springing violets rise,
Animated by thy eyes;
Lavishly their charms they spread,
To make a soft enamelled bed;
And like this downy swelling breast,
They rise, and languish to be pressed.

But O thou happy, happy grove,
Sacred to the God of love,

With the thickest umbrage shade us,
Let no piercing rays invade us:
Let no light but Beauty's charm us,
Let no heat but Beauty's warm us;
Make our artificial light,
Close and sweet as our delight.

And now, my dear, no longer coy,
Let us give a thought to joy!
Then, closely lay thy lips to mine,
And let our souls and bodies join:
Let me suck thy balmy breath,
And fainting, glory in my death.
Take me dying to thy arms,
Ah me! I die with pleasing pain,
O kindle me to life again.
And now, my brighter Queen of Love,
I'll confess the stronger Jove.

O happiest transport, dearest blessing,
Sweetest-rapture past expressing!
Who can tell the thrilling pleasure,
When the nymph resigns her treasure!
When she melts in ripen'd blisses,
Breathing out her soul in kisses!
When in Paradise she lies,
And rolls her pretty dying eyes:
While the Snake with softer strains,
Sweetly stings her tickling veins!
She pants, she sighs, she heaves her charms,
And locks her vig'rous lover in her arms.

NANCY THE BED-MAKER

(By William Pattison. From *Poetical Works*, 1728)

'TWAS once upon a summer's day,
As on my downy bed I lay:
All over in tedious sweat,
To ease my limbs, and cool the heat;
When pretty Nancy gently came,
Nancy, the object of my flame!
So soft she looked, so sweet, so fair,
With such a winning, yielding air;
With such an easy comely pride,
She seemed a lovely, longing bride!

Obedient to her eyes command,
I seized her warm consenting hand;
Upon the downy bed displayed,
The unmurmuring, panting, struggling maid.
There ravished, feasted on her charms,
Her heaving breast, her twining arms,
Her Ivory neck, her roguish eyes,
Her slender waist, her taper thighs,
With magic beauties these between
Too soft; too dazzling to be seen.
Melting, I clasped them close to mine,
And in a moment grew divine!

THE BASHFUL LOVER

(Words by Mr. Theobald. From *The Lady's Triumph*)

ON a Bank of Flowers in a Summer's Day,
Inviting and undressed,
In her Bloom of Years bright Celia lay,
With love and Sleep oppress'd;
When a youthful Swain with admiring Eyes
Wish'd he durst the fair Maid surprise,
With a Fa, la, la, etc.
But feared approaching Spies.

As he gazed, a gentle Breeze arose,
That fanned her Robes aside;
And the sleeping Nymph did the Charms disclose,
Which, waking, She would hide,
Then his Breath grew short, and his Pulse beat high,
He longed to touch what he chanced to spy.
With a Fa, la, la, etc.

All amazed he stood, with her Beauties fired
And blessed the courteous Wind;
Then in Whispers sighed, and the Gods desir'd,
That Celia might be kind,
Then with Hope grown bold, he advanced amain;
But she laughed loud in a Dream, and, again,
With a Fa, la, la, etc.
Repell'd the tim'rous Swain.

Yet when once Desire has inflamed the Soul,
All modest Doubts withdraw;
And the God of Love does each Fear control,
That would the Lover awe.

Shall a Prize like this, says the vent'rous Boy,
'Scape, and I not the Means employ,
With a Fa, la, la, etc.
To seize the proffer'd Toy?

Here the glowing Youth, to relieve his Pain,
The slumb'ring Maid caressed;
And with trembling Hands (O the simple Swain!)
Her glowing Bosom pressed:
When the Virgin waked, and affrighted flew,
Yet looked, as wishing he would pursue,
With a Fa, la, la, etc.
But Damon miss'd his Cue.

Now repenting that he had let her fly,
Himself he thus accused;
What a dull and stupid Thing was I
That such a chance abused?
To my Shame 'twill now on the Plains be said,
Damon a Virgin asleep betrayed,
With a Fa, la, la, etc.
Yet let her go a Maid.

THE PRESBYTERIAN WEDDING

—Procul ô procul este Profani! Conclamat Vates totoque abstinte Luco.—VIRGIL.

(Words and music from *Musical Miscellany*, 1729)

A CERTAIN Presbyterian Pair
Were wedded t'other day;
And when in Bed the Lambs were laid,
Their Pastor came to pray.

But first he bade each Guest depart,
Nor sacred Rites profane;
For carnal Eyes such Mysteries
Can never entertain.

Then with a Puritanic Air,
Unto the Lord he pray'd,
That he would please to grant Encrease
To that same man and maid:

And that the Husbandman might dress
Full well the Vine his Wife;
And like a Vine she still might twine
About him all her Life.

Sack Posset then he gave them both,
And said with lifted Eyes,
Blest of the Lord! with one Accord
Begin your Enterprise.

The Bridegroom then drew near his Spouse,
T'apply Prolific Balm;
And while they strove in mutual Love,
The Parson sang a Psalm.

THE GALLANT SCHEMER'S PETITION TO THE HONOURABLE MRS. F———S

(Words and music from *Musical Miscellany*, 1731)

BY the Mole on your Bubbies so round and so white,
By the Mole on your Neck, where my Arms would delight,
By what-ever Mole else you have got out of sight.
I pr'ythee now hear me, dear Molly.

By the Kiss just a starting from off your moist Lips,
By the delicate up-and-down Jott of your Hips,
By the Tip of your Tongue, which all Tongues out-tips
I pr'ythee now hear me, dear Molly.

By the Down on your Bosom on which my Soul dies,
By the Thing of all Things which you love as your Eyes,
By the Thoughts you lie down with, and those when you rise,
I pr'ythee now hear me, dear Molly.

By all the soft Pleasures a Virgin can share,
By the critical Minute no Virgin can bear,
By the Question I burn for to ask, but don't dare.
I pr'ythee now hear me, dear Molly.

"O MITHER DEAR, I GIN TO FEAR"

(Words from Thomson's *Orpheus Caledonius*, 1733)

O MITHER dear, I 'gin to fear,
Tho' I'm baith good, and bonny,
I winna keep; for in my Sleep
I start and dream of Johnny.
When Johnny then comes down the Glen,
To woo me dinna hinder;
But with Content gi' your Consent;
For we two ne'er can sinder.

Better to marry, than miscarry;
For Shame and Skaith's the Clink o't,
To thole the Dool, to mount the Stool
I downa' bide to think o't:
Sae while 'tis time, I'll shun the Crime,
That gars poor Epps gae whinging,
With Hainches few, and Een sae blew,
To a' the Bedrals bindging.

Had Eppy's Apron bidden down,
The Kirk had ne'er a kend it;
But when the Word's gane thro' the town
Alack! how can she mend it?
Now Tam maun face the Minister,
And she maun mount the Pillar;
And that's the way that they maun gae
For poor Folk has na Siller.

Now ha'd ye'r Tongue, my Daughter young,
Reply'd the kindly Mither,
Get Johnny's Hand in holy Band,
Syne wap ye'r Wealth together.
I'm o' the mind, if he be kind,
Ye'll do your part discreetly;
And prove a Wife, will gar his Life,
And Barrel run right sweetly.

AN IMITATION OF CHAUCER

(By Alexander Pope, *c.* 1728)

WOMEN ben full of ragerie,
Yet swinken not sans secresie.
Thilke Moral shall ye understond,
From schoole-boy's Tale of fayre Irelond;
Which to the Fennes hath him betake,
To filche the grey Ducke fro the Lake.
Right then there passen by the way
His Aunt, and eke her Daughters tway.
Ducke in his trowses hath he bent,
Not to be spied of ladies gent,
But ho! our Nephew, crieth one;
Ho! quoth another, Cozen John;
And stoppen, and lough, and callen out—
This sely Clerke full low doth lout:
They asken that, and talken this,
Lo, here is Coz, and here is Miss.
But, as he glozeth with speeches soote,
The Ducke sore tickleth his Erse-roote:

Fore-piece and buttons all-to-brest,
Forth thrust a white neck and red crest,
Te-hee, cried ladies; clerks nought spake;
O Moder, Moder! quoth the Daughter,
Be thilke same thing Maids longen a'ter?
Bette is to pine on coals and chalke,
Then trust on Mon whose yerde can talke.

PHRYNE

(By Alexander Pope)

PHRYNE had talents for mankind;
Open she was and unconfin'd,
Like some free port of trade:
Merchants unloaded here their freight,
And agents from each foreign state
Here first their entry made.

Her learning and good breeding such,
Whether th' Italian or the Dutch;
Spaniards or French, came to her,
To all obliging she'd appear;
'T was Si Signior, 't was Yaw Mynheer,
'T was S'il vous plait, Monsieur.

Obscure by birth, renown'd by crimes,
Still changing names, religions, climes,
At length she turns a bride;
In diamonds, pearls, and rich brocades,
She shines the first of batter'd jades,
And flutters in her pride.

So have I known those insects fair
(Which curious Germans hold so rare)
Still vary shapes and dyes;
Still gain new titles with new forms;
First grubs obscene, then wriggling worms,
Then painted butterflies.

PROLOGUE BY THE WIFE OF BATH

(Paraphrase from Chaucer, by Alexander Pope)

YE sov'reign Wives! give ear, and understand:
Thus shall ye speak, and exercise command;
For never was it given to mortal man
To lie so boldly as we women can:

Forswear the fact, tho' seen with both his eyes,
And call your maids to witness how he lies.
  Hark, old Sir Paul! (it was thus I used to say)
Whence is our neighbour's wife so rich and gay?
Treated, caress'd, where'er she's pleased to roam—
I sit in tatters, and immured at home.
Why to her house dost thou so oft repair?
Art thou so am'rous? and is she so fair?
If I but see a cousin or a friend,
Lord! how you swell and rage like any fiend!
But you reel home, a drunken beastly bear,
Then preach till midnight in your easy chair;
Cry, wives are false, and every woman evil,
And give up all that's female to the devil.
  If poor (you say), she drains her husband's purse;
If rich, she keeps her priest, or something worse;
If highly born, intolerably vain,
Vapours and pride by turns possess her brain;
Now gaily mad, now sourly splenetic,
Freakish when well, and fretful when she's sick.
If fair, then chaste she cannot long abide,
By pressing youth attack'd on every side;
If foul, her wealth the lusty lover lures,
Or else her wit some fool-gallant procures,
Or else she dances with becoming grace,
Or shape excuses the defects of face.

* * * * * *

Take all the freedoms of a married life;
I know thee for a virtuous, faithful wife.
  Lord! when you have enough, what need you care
How merrily soever others fare?
Tho' all the day I give and take delight,
Doubt not sufficient will be left at night.
'Tis but a just and rational desire
To light a taper at a neighbour's fire.
There's danger too, you think, in rich array,
And none can long be modest that are gay.
The cat, if you but singe her tabby skin,
The chimney keeps, and sits content within:
But once grown sleek, will from her corner run,
Sport with her tail, and wanton in the sun:
She licks her fair round face, and frisks abroad
To show her fur, and to be catterwaw'd.

* * * * * *

If once my husband's arm was o'er my side,
"What! so familiar with your spouse?" I cried:
I levied first a tax upon his need;

Then let him—'t was a nicety indeed!
Let all mankind this certain maxim hold;
Marry who will, our sex is to be sold.
With empty hands no tassels you can lure,
But fulsome love for gain we can endure;
For gold we love the impotent and old,
And heave, and pant, and kiss, and cling, for gold.
Yet with embraces curses oft I mixt,
Then kiss'd again, and chid, and rail'd betwixt.
Well, I may make my will in peace, and die,
For not one word in man's arrears am I.
To drop a dear dispute I was unable,
Ev'n though the Pope himself had sat at table;
But when my point was gain'd, then thus I spoke:
"Billy, my dear, how sheepishly you look!
Approach, my spouse, and let me kiss thy cheek;
Thou shouldst be always thus resign'd and meek!"

* * * * * *

The wives of all my family have ruled
Their tender husbands, and their passions cool'd.
Fie! 't is unmanly thus to sigh and groan:
What! would you have me to yourself alone?
Why, take me, love! take all and every part!
Here's your revenge! you love it at your heart.
Would I vouchsafe to sell what Nature gave,
You little think what custom I could have.
But see! I'm all your own—nay hold—for shame!
What means my dear?—indeed—you are to blame.
Thus with my first three lords I pass'd my life,
A very woman and a very wife.
What sums from these old spouses I could raise
Procur'd young husbands in my riper days.
Tho' past my bloom, not yet decay'd was I,
Wanton and wild, and chatter'd like a pie.
In country dances still I bore the bell,
And sung as sweet as evening Philomel.
To clear my quail-pipe, and refresh my soul,
Full oft I drain'd the spicy nut-brown bowl;
Rich luscious wines, that youthful blood improve,
And warm the swelling veins to feats of love:
For 't is as sure as cold engenders hail,
A liquorish mouth must have a lech'rous tail:
Wine lets no lover unrewarded go,
As all true gamesters by experience know.

* * * * * *

My fourth spouse was not exceeding true;
He kept, 't was thought, a private miss or two;

But all that score I paid—As how? you'll say:
Not with my body, in a filthy way;
But I so dress'd, and danc'd, and drank, and din'd
And view'd a friend with eyes so very kind,
As stung his heart, and made his marrow fry,
With burning rage and frantic jealousy.
His soul, Hope, enjoys eternal glory,
For here on earth I was his purgatory.

* * * * * *

Now for my fifth lov'd lord, the last and best;
(Kind Heav'n afford him everlasting rest!)
Full hearty was his love, and I can show
The tokens on my ribs in black and blue;
Yet with a knack my heart he could have won,
While yet the smart was shooting in the bone,
How quaint an appetite in women reigns!
Free gifts we scorn, and love what costs us pains.
Let men avoid us, and on them we leap;
A glutted market makes provision cheap,
In pure good will I took this jovial spark,
Of Oxford he, a most egregious clerk.
He boarded with a widow in the town,
A trusty gossip, one dame Alison;
Full well the secrets of my soul she knew,
Better than e'er our parish priest could do.

* * * * * *

This clerk, myself, and my good neighbour Alse,
To see, be seen, to tell, and gather tales.
Visits to every church we daily paid,
And march'd in every holy masquerade;
The stations duly and the vigils kept;
Not much we fasted, but scarce ever slept.
At sermons, too, I shone in scarlet gay:
The wasting moth ne'er spoil'd my best array;
The cause was this, I wore it every day.
'Twas when fresh May her early blossoms yields,
This clerk and I were walking in the fields,
We grew so intimate, I can't tell how,
I pawn'd my honour, and engaged my vow,
If e'er I laid my husband in his urn,
That he, and only he, should serve my turn.
We straight struck hands, the bargain was agreed;
I still have shifts against a time of need.
The mouse that always trusts to one poor hole
Can never be a mouse of any soul.
I vow'd I scarce could sleep since first I knew him,
And durst be sworn he had bewitch'd me to him;

If e'er I slept I dream'd of him alone,
And dreams foretell, as learned men have shown
All this I said; but dreams, Sirs, I had none:
I follow'd but my crafty crony's lore,
Who bid me tell this lie—and twenty more.

* * * * * *

PHYLLIS

(By Jonathon Swift. *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse*, 1727-32)

DESPONDING Phyllis was endued
With ev'ry talent of a prude:
She trembled when a man drew near;
Salute her, and she turned her ear:
If o'er against her you were placed,
She durst not look above your waist:
She'd rather take you to her bed,
Than let you see her dress her head;
In church you hear her, thro' the crowd,
Repeat the absolution loud:
In church, secure behind her fan,
She durst behold that monster man:
There practised how to place her head,
And bite her lips to make them red;
Or, on the mat devoutly kneeling,
Would lift her eyes up to the ceiling.
For neighbouring beaux to see it bare.
At length a lucky lover came,
And found admittance to the dame.
Suppose all parties now agreed,
The writings drawn, the lawyer feed,
The vicar and the ring bespoke:
Guess, how could such a match be broke?
See then what mortals place their bliss in!
Next morn betimes the bride was missing:
The mother screamed, the father chid;
Where can this idle wench be hid?
No news of Phyl! the bridegroom came,
And thought his bride had skulked for shame;
Because her father used to say,
The girl had such a bashful way!
Now John the butler must be sent
To learn the road that Phyllis went:

The groom was wished to saddle Crop;
For John must neither light nor stop,
But find her, wheresoe'er she fled,
And bring her back alive or dead.
See here again the devil to do!
For truly John was missing too:
The horse and pillion both were gone!
Phyllis, it seems, was fled with John.
Old Madam, who went up to find
What papers Phyl had left behind,
A letter on the toilet sees,
"To my much honoured father—these—"
('Tis always done, romances tell us,
When daughters run away with fellows,)
Filled with the choicest common-places,
By others used in the like cases.
"That long ago a fortune-teller
Exactly said what now befell her;
And in a glass had made her see
A serving-man of low degree.
It was her fate, must be forgiven;
For marriages were made in Heaven:
His pardon begged: but, to be plain,
She'd do't if 'twere to do again:
Thank'd God, 'twas neither shame nor sin;
For John was come of honest kin.
Love never thinks of rich and poor;
She'd beg with John from door to door.
Forgive her, if it be a crime;
She'll never do't another time.
She ne'er before in all her life
Once disobey'd him, maid nor wife."
One argument she summ'd up all in,
"The thing was done and past recalling;
And therefore hoped she should recover
His favour when his passion's over.
She valued not what others thought her,
And was—his most obedient daughter."
Fair maidens all, attend the Muse,
Who now the wand'ring pair pursues:
Away they rode in homely sort,
Their journey long, their money short;
The loving couple well bemired;
The horse and both the riders tired:
Their vituals bad, their lodgings worse;
Phyl cried! and John began to curse:

Phyl wished that she had strained a limb,
When first she ventured out with him;
John wish'd that he had broke a leg,
When first for her he quitted Peg.
But what adventures more befell 'em,
The Muse hath now no time to tell 'em;
How Johnny wheedled, threatened, fawned,
Till Phyllis all her trinkets pawn'd:
How oft she broke her marriage vows,
In kindness to maintain her spouse,
Till swains unwholesome spoiled the trade;
For now the surgeon must be paid,
To whom those perquisites are gone,
In Christian justice due to John.
When food and raiment now grew scarce,
Fate put a period to the farce,
And with exact poetic justice;
For John was landlord, Phyllis hostess;
They keep, at Stains, the Old Blue Boar,
Are cat and dog, and rogue and whore.

TO FLORA DREST

(From *The Musical Miscellany*, c. 1729)

WHY art thou drest, my lovely Maid!
In Gold and Gems, and rich Brocade,
When Gold, and Gems, and rich Brocade,
Conceal thy Charms, my lovely Maid!
Why spends't thou all this Time and Care,
To form thy Shape, to fold thy Hair?
Thy Shape unbraced, thy flowing Hair,
More beauteous are without thy Care.

Woulds't thou, indeed, be finely dressed?
Put by this Robe which hides thy Breast:
Unbind thy Hair, and bare thy Breast,
Thou art, my Charmer! finely dressed.
Remove these Vestments all away,
Which like dark Clouds obscure the Day:
O! let them not obscure thy Day:
Remove them all, my Fair! away!

Then shining forth adorn'd with Charms,
Ah! let me fold thee in my Arms!
Transported, fold thee in my Arms
And gaze and wonder at thy Charms.

THE DREAM

(From *The Musical Miscellany*, (c. 1729); the music by Handel)

BENEATH a shady Willow,
Hard by a purling Stream,
A Mossy Bank my Pillow,
I fancy'd in a Dream,
That I the charming Phillis
Did eagerly embrace;
Her Breast as white as Lillies,
And Rosamonda's Face.

What ecstasies of Pleasure
She gave, to tell's in vain,
When with the hidden Treasure
She blest her am'rous Swain:
Could nought our Joys discover,
And I my Dream believe,
I so could sleep for ever,
And still be so deceived.

But when I waked, deluded,
And found all but a Dream,
I fain would have eluded
The melancholy Theme.
Ye Gods! there's no enduring
So exquisite a Pain;
The Wound is past all curing,
That Cupid gave the Swain.

THE POWER OF LOVE

(From *The Musical Miscellany*, c. 1729)

AT dead of Night, when wrapt in Sleep
The peaceful Cottage lay,
Pastora left her folded Sheep,
Her Garland, Crook, and useless Scrip;
Love led the Nymph a-stray.

His eager Arms the Nymph embrace,
And, so assuage his Pain,
His restless Passion he obeys:
At such an Hour, in such a Place,
What Lover could contain?

In vain she call'd the conscious Moon,
  The Moon no Succour gave:
The cruel Stars unmoved, looked on,
And seemed to smile at what was done,
  Nor would her Honour save.

Vanquished at last, by powerful Love,
  The Nymph expiring lay;
No more she sighed, no more she strove,
Since no kind Stars were found above,
  She blushed and died away.

Yet blest the Grove, her conscious Flight,
  And Youth, that did betray;
And panting, dying with Delight,
She blest the kind transporting Night,
  And cursed approaching Day.

A SATIRE ON MARRIAGE

(By Thomas Brown. *Works in Prose and Verse*, 1730)

THE husband's the pilot, the wife is the ocean,
  He always in danger, she always in motion:
And she that in wedlock twice hazards his carcass,
Twice ventures a drowning, and faith that's a hard case;
Even at our own weapons the females defeat us,
And death, only death, can sign our quietus.
Not to tell you sad stories of Liberty lost,
How all our mirth is all palled, and our pleasures all crost;
This pagan confinement, this damnable station,
Suits no order, nor age, nor degree in thy nation.
  The Levite it keeps from parochial duty,
For who can at once mind religion and beauty?
The rich it charms with expenses and trouble.
And a poor beast, you know, can scarce carry double;
'Twas invented they tell you to keep us from falling,
Oh, the virtue and grace of a shrill caterwauling.
But it pulls in your game, ah, but how do you know, sir,
How often your neighbour breaks up your enclosure?
  For this is the principal comfort of marriage,
You must eat, tho' a hundred have a spit in your porridge.
If at night you're inactive, and fail of performing,
Enter thunder and lightning, and bloodshed next morning.
Cries the bone of your side, thanks, dear Mr. Horner,
This comes of your sinning with Crape in the corner.

Then to make up the breach, all your strength you must rally,
And labor and sweat like a slave at the galley.
Yet still you must charge, oh, blessed condition!
Tho' you know, to your cost, you've no ammunition.
Till at last, my dear mortified fool of a man,
You're not able to make a poor flash in the pan.
Fire, female and flood, begin with a letter,
And the world's for them all not a farthing the better.

Your flood is soon gone; you your fire may humble,
If into the flame store of water you tumble;
But to cool the damned heat of your wife's titillation
You may use half the engines and pumps in the nation.
Thus, sir, I have sent you my thoughts of the matter.
Judge as you please, but I scorn for to flatter.

MELISINDA'S MISFORTUNE

(By Thomas Brown. *Works in Prose and Verse)*

TIRED with business of the day,
Upon her couch supinely lay
Fair Melisinda void of care,
No living creature being near:
When straight a calm and gentle sleep
Did o'er her drowsy eyelids creep;
Her senses thus by fetters tied,
By nimble fancy were supplied:
Her quick imagination brought
The ideas of her waking thought.
She dreamt herself a new made bride
In bed, by young Philander's side:
The posset eat, the stocking throw,
And all the company withdrawn;
And now the blest Elysium,
Of all her wished for joys, is come
Philander, all dissolved in charms,
Lies raptured in her circling arms,
With panting breasts and swimming eyes
She meets the visionary joys;
In all the amorous postures love,
Which the height of ecstasy could move;
But as she roving did advance
Her trembling legs, O dire mischance!
The couch being near the fireside,
She expanded them, alas! too wide:

She exposed her nethermost attire
Unto the embraces of the fire;
So the chaste Phoenix of the East
With fluttering fires her spicy nest.

The flames at first did trembling seize
The dangling hem of the lost prize;
But finding no resistance, higher
As 'tis their nature to aspire,
Approaching near the seat of bliss,
The centre of earthly happiness,
Which vastly more of pleasure yields,
Than all the feigned Elysian fields.

At last the flames were grown so rude,
They boldly everywhere intrude;
They soon recalled the lady's sense,
And chased the pleasing vision thence:
Soon as her eyes recovered light,
She straight beheld, the dismal sight.

Then viewing of her half-burnt smock,
Thus to herself the sad nymph spoke:
"Is this the effect of dreams? Is this
The fruit of all my fancy's bliss?
Misfortunes will, I see, betide,
When maidens throw their legs too wide:
Had I but kept my legs across,
I and my smock had had no loss:
I ought, I'm sure, to have more heed,
For ne'er had virgin greater need:
My kindness and my little care
Has left me scarce a smock to wear.
But I could bear the loss of them
Had not the fire disturbed my dream.
Ah! cruel flames, you're too unkind
To chase these fancies from my mind:
Down, down into your native cell
In your own blazing regions dwell:
Vex me no more, let me possess
My linen, or my dream in peace.
Thus the poor nymph, bewailed her treacherous luck,
At once to lose so good a dream and smock.

THE MILL, MILL—O—

(And old Scots countryside song; (1731) from *Musical Miscellany*, vi. 76; also in *Merry Muses of Caledonia* (c. 1800), collected by Robert Burns)

BENEATH a green shade I fand a fair maid,
Was sleeping sound and still, O;
A lowan wi' love, my fancy did rove
Around her wi' good will, O;
Her bosom I prest; but sunk in her rest
She stirr'dna my joy to spill, O,
While kindly she slept, close to her I crept,
And kiss'd, and kiss'd her my fill, O.

Oblig'd by command in Flanders to land,
T' employ my courage and skill, O,
Frae her quietly I saw, hoist sails and awa,
For the wind blew fair on the billow.
'Twa years brought me hame, where loud-fraising fame
Tauld me, with a voice right shrill, O,
My lass, like a fool, has mounted the stool,
Nor kend wha had done her the ill, O.

Mair fond of her charms, with my son in her arms,
I ferlyin' speir'd how she fell, O,
Wi' the tear in her eye, quoth she, "let me die,
"Sweet sir, gin I can tell, O."
Love gave the command, I took her by the hand,
And bad her a' fears expel, O,
And nae mair look wan, for I was the man,
Wha had done her the deed mysel', O.

My bonny sweet lass, on the gowany grass,
Beneath the Shilling hill, O;
If I did offence, I'll make ye amends,
Before I leave Peggy's mill, O.
O the mill, mill, O; an' the kill, kill, O,
An' the coggin' of the wheel, O;
The sack and the sieve, a' that ye maun leave,
An' round with a sodger reel, O.

Another Version

As I came down yon water side,
And by yon Shilling hill, O,
There I spied a bonny lass,
A Lass that I lo'ed right weel, O.

The mill, mill, O; and the kill, kill, O,
An' the coggin' o' Peggy's wheel, O,
The sack an' the sieve, a' she did leave,
An' danc'd the miller's reel, O.

I spier'd at her, gin she cou'd play,
But the lassie had nae skill, O,
An' yet she wasna a' to blame,
She pat it in my will, O.
The mill, mill, O; and the kill, kill, O,
An' the coggin' o' Peggy's wheel, O,
The sack an' the sieve, a' she did leave,
An' danc'd the miller's reel, O.

Then she fell o'er, an' sae did I,
An' danc'd the miller's reel, O,
Whene'er that bonny lassie comes again,
She shall hae her ma't ground weel, O.
The mill, mill, O; and the kill, kill, O,
An' the coggin' o' Peggy's wheel, O,
The sack an' the sieve, a' she did leave,
An' danc'd the miller's reel, O.

CLOE'S PRECAUTION

(From *Windsor Medley*, 1731)

FORGIVE me, Venus, if I tell,
What on thy sacred Eve befel;
When happy, if forbid to boast,
Much of the Happiness is lost.
Cloe, a Nymph of matchless Mien,
Who long the reigning Toast had been,
Of all the Wits, and Rakes, and Smarts,
That prowl, to prey on Virgin's Hearts;
Yet ever to her Honour true,
Unless—what's that?—with one or two.
One night as we together sat,
Passing the smiling Hours in chat,
We took a Glass—'twas pretty late.
The Nymph relaxed, her Eyes confessed,
Her Virtue scarce would stand the test.
Love, Wine, or both, had filled her Head,
The Spies were sent away to bed;
Spight of her Pride, the engaging she,
Avowed a Passion—and for me.

Then let's to bed—you shan't,—I will;
Don't offer't, for I vow I'll squeal.
Child, if you do, 'twill be all one.
Nay, then—but keep your Breeches on;
Agreed,—'twas done as soon as said,
I in my Breeches—went to bed.

THE PENITENT NUN

(By John Lockman; from *Musical Miscellany*, 1731)

DAME Jane a sprightly Nun, and gay,
And formed of very yielding Clay,
Had long with resolution strove
To guard against the Shafts of Love.
Fond Cupid smiling, spies the Fair,
And soon he baffles all her Care,
In vain she tries her Pain to smother,
The Nymph too frail, the Nymph too frail,
Becomes a Mother.

But no, these little Follies o'er,
She firmly vows she'll sin no more;
No more to Vice will fall a Prey,
But spend in Prayer each fleeting Day.
Close in her Cell immur'd she lies,
Nor from the Cross removes her Eyes;
Whilst Sisters crowding at the Crate,
Spend all their Time, spend all their Time in
Worldly Prate.

The Abbess, overjoyed to find
This happy Change in Jenny's Mind,
The rest, with Air composed, addressing,
"Daughters, if you expect a Blessing,
"From pious Jane, Example take,
"The World and all its Joys forsake."
"We will" (they all reply'd as One)
"But first let's do as Jane has done."

FANCY'S ALL

(Words by Mr. Mitchell; from *Musical Miscellany*, 1731)

BLACK, White, Yellow or Red,
Woman's a charming lovely Creature.
Get her but fairly to Bed
And boggle no more about the Matter,
'Tis not Complexion
That causes Affection;
Nor Graces appearing,
That make her endearing;
But Fancy in Lovers,
Such secrets discovers
As presently set their Spirits in motion.
Woman's a Treasure,
Created for Pleasure;
And what are their Faces,
Compared to Embraces?
If Joan is but ready,
She's good as her Lady:
A Proof that Delight is the Daughter of Notion.

THE COUNTRY LASS

(From Thomson's *Orpheus Caledonius*, ii. 85)

ALTHO' I be but a Country Lass,
Yet a lofty Mind I bear-O,
And think my sell as good as those,
That rich Apparel wear-O.
Altho' my Gown be hame spun Gray,
My skin it is as saft-O,
As them that Satin Weeds do wear,
And carry their heads alaft-O.

What tho' I keep my Father's Sheep?
The thing that must be done-O,
With Garlands of the Finest Flowers
To shade me frae the Sun-O.
When they are feeding pleasantly,
Where Grass and Flowers do spring-O,
Then on a flowry Bank at Noon,
I set me down and sing-O.

My Paisly Piggy, corked with Sage,
Contains my Drink but thin-O:
No Wines do e'er my Brain enrage,
Or tempt my Mind to sin-O;
My Country Curds, and wooden Spoon,
I think them unco fine-O;
And on a flowry Bank at Noon,
I set me down and dine-O.

Altho' my Parents cannot raise
Great Bags of shining Gold-O,
Like them whose Daughters, now-a-days,
Like Swine are bought and sold-O;
Yet my fair Body it shall keep
And honest Heart within-O,
And for twice fifty thousand Crowns,
I value not a Pin-O.

I use nae Gums upon my Hair,
Nor Chains about my Neck-O,
Nor shining Rings upon my Hands,
My Fingers straight to deck-O;
But for that Lad to me shall fa',
And I have Grace to wed-O,
I'll keep a Jewel worth them a',
I mean my Maidenhead-O.

If canny Fortune give to me,
The Man I dearly love-O,
Tho' we want Gear, I dinna care,
My hands I can improve-O;
Expecting for a Blessing still,
Descending from above-O,
Then we'll embrace and sweetly kiss,
Repeating Tales of Love-O.

DOWN THE BURN DAVIE

(From Thomson's *Orpheus Caledonius*)

WHEN Trees did bud, and Fields were green,
And Broom bloom'd fair to see;
When Mary was compleat Fifteen,
And Love laugh'd in her Eye;
Blyth Davie's Blinks her Heart did move,
To speak her Mind thus free,
Gang down the Burn, Davie, Love,
And I shall follow thee.

Now Davie did each Lad surpass,
That dwelt on this Burn-side,
And Mary was the bonniest Lass,
Just meet to be a Bride;
Her Cheeks were rosy, red and white,
Her Een were bonny blue;
Her Looks were like Aurora bright,
Her Lips like dropping Dew.

As down the Burn they took their way,
What tender Tales they said!
His Cheek to hers he oft did lay,
And with her Bosom play'd;
Till baith at length impatient grown,
To be mair fully blest,
In yonder Vale, they lean'd them down;
Love only saw the rest.

What pass'd I guess, was harmless Play,
And naithing sure unmeet;
For ganging hame, I heard him say,
They liked a wa'k sae sweet;
And that they aften shou'd return,
Sic pleasure to renew.
Quoth Mary, Love, I like the Burn,
And ay shall follow you.

"MY JOCKEY BLYTH FOR WHAT THOU HAST DONE"

(From *Orpheus Caledonius*, ii., c. 1733)

Peggy

MY Jocky blyth for what thou hast done,
There is nae help nor mending;
For thou hast jogg'd me out of Tune,
For a' thy fair pretending.
My Mither sees a Change on me,
For my Complexion dashes,
And this alas! has been with thee
Sae late amang the Rashes.

Jocky

My Peggy, what I've said I'll do,
To free thee frae her Scouling;

Come then, and let us buckle to,
Nae langer let's be folling:
For her content I'll instant wed,
Since thy Complexion dashes;
And then we'll try a Feather-bed,
'Tis faster than the Rashes.

Peggy

Then Jocky since thy Love's so true,
Let Mither scoul, I'm easy:
Sae lang's I live I ne'er shall rue
For what I've done to please thee.
And there's my hand I'll ne'er complain:
O! well's me on the Rashes;
When e'er thou likes I'll do't again
And a Feg for a' their Clashes.

THE RAVISH'D LOVER

(A Broadside Song with music, c. 1736)

WHEN Fanny blooming fair
First met my ravished Sight,
Caught with her Shape and Air,
I felt a strange delight:
Whilst eagerly I gazed,
Admiring ev'ry part,
I every feature praised,
She stole into my Heart.

In her bewitching Eyes
Young smiling Loves appear,
There Cupid basking lyes,
His Shafts are hoarded there:
Her Blooming cheeks are dyed
With Colour all their own,
Excelling far the pride
Of Roses newly blown.

Her well turned limbs confess
The lucky hand of Jove,
Her Features all express,
The Beauteous Queen of Love.

What Flames my Nerves invade,
When I behold the Breast
Of that too lovely Maid,
Rise suing to be prest.

Venus round Fanny's waste,
Hath her own Cestus Bound,
With Guardian Cupids graced,
Who sport the circle round;
How happy will he be,
Who shall her Zone unlose;
That bliss to all but me
May Heav'n and she refuse.

SONG

(Anonymous. From *The Cupid*, 1736)

DEAR Colin, prevent my warm Blushes,
Since how can I speak without pain,
My eyes have oft told you my Wishes,
Oh, can't you their meaning explain:
My Passion would lose by Expression,
And you too might cruelly blame;
Then don't you expect a confession
Of what is too tender to name:

Since yours is the province of speaking,
Why should you expect it from me?
Our wishes should be in our keeping,
Till you tell us what they should be:
Then quickly why don't your discover,
Did your heart feel such tortures as mine,
I need not tell over and over,
What I in my bosom confine.

SONG

(Anonymous. From *The Cupid*, 1736)

OH fie! what mean I, foolish Maid,
In this remote and silent shade,
To meet with you alone?
My Heart does with the place combine,
And both are more your friends than mine:
Oh! I shall be undone.

A savage beast I would not fear;
Or, should I meet with villains here,
  I to some cave wou'd run:
But such enchanting arts you show,
I cannot strive, I cannot go:
  Oh! I shall be undone.

Ah! give those sweet temptations o'er,
I'll touch those dang'rous lips no more—
  What, must we yet fool on?
Ah! now I yield; ah! now I fall:
And now I have no Breath at all:
  And now I'm quite undone.

I'll see no more your tempting face,
Nor meet you in this dangerous place;
  My fame's for ever gone.
But fame, to speak the truth, is vain,
And every yielding maid does gain,
  By being so undone.

In such a pleasing storm of bliss,
To such a bank of paradise,
  Who would not swiftly run?
If you but truth to me will swear,
We'll meet again, nor do I care
  How oft I am undone.

SONG

(Anonymous. From *The Cupid*, 1736)

WHILST Strephon, in his pride of youth,
  To me alone profess'd
Dissembled passion, dress'd like truth,
  He triumph'd in my breast.

I lodged him near my yielding heart,
  Denied him not my arms;
Deluded by his pleasing art,
  Transported with his charms.

The wanderer now I lose, or share
  With every lovely maid:
Who makes the Heart of man her care,
  Shall have her own betray'd:

Our charms on them we vainly prove,
And think we conquest gain;
Where one a victim falls to love,
A thousand tyrants reign.

SONG

(Anonymous. From *The Cupid*, 1736)

CUSTOM, alas! doth partial prove,
Nor gives us even measure:
To maids it is a pain to love,
But 'tis to men a pleasure.

They freely can their thoughts explain,
Whilst ours must burn within:
We have got eyes and tongues in vain,
And truth from us is sin.

Men to new joys and conquests fly,
And yet no hazard run.
Poor we are left if we deny;
Or if we yield, undone.

Then equal laws let custom find,
Nor either sex opress:
More freedom give to womankind,
Or give to mankind less.

WHEN I COURT THEE

(Anonymous. From *The Cupid*, 1736)

WHEN I court thee, near Molly, to grant me the bliss,
With a squeeze by the hand, and then with a kiss;
You, like an arch baggage, for ever reply,
In the same loving mood, can you live, sir, and die?
Then you ask me, how long this same passion will last,
And if I shan't cool, when the moment is past?
Such questions as these might e'en damp a beginner,
And must certainly puzzle an old battered sinner.
But to shew you, for once, how much I despise
To tell you, like some men, a thousand damned lies,
My mind, dearest girl, in few Words you shall know,
And if, on these Terms, you think well of it, so;
If not, for my part, I shall ne'er take it ill,
For if one woman won't, there are thousands that will.

That I like you at present, you never can doubt;
For what do I take all this trouble about?
That my passion is real, and void of disguise,
You may feel my pulse; you may read in my eyes:
When these roll so fast, and that beats so quick,
The deuce must be in't, if it's all but a trick.

Thy fresh ruddy lips, and thy teeth all so white,
Thy round tempting bubbies, which heave with delight,
Thy trim taper shape, and thy dear little feet,
Thy voice that's so soft, and thy breath that's so sweet;
Thy bright beaming eyes, and thy gay golden hair,
Provoke a sensation too killing to bear;
Above or below nothing faulty is seen;
And, faith, I dare answer for what lies between.

So many rare charms surely never can cloy,
But Night, after Night, wou'd afford one new joy;
Methinks, in my passion, I never cou'd vary,
If a thousand examples didn't prove the contrary:
For, like other men, I am but flesh and blood;
Yet, if I'm no better, I hope I'm as good;
Then since, dearest Molly, any one whom you take,
Is as likely as me, to prove false and forsake,
If you e'er run the hazard, let me be your man,
And I'll love you as much, and as long as I can.
We'll toy, ramp, and revel, we'll bill, and we'll coo,
And do everything else, which young lovers do.
But if, upon trial, and often repeating,
(For the proof of the pudding's, you know, in the eating)
Your passion or mine from the bias shou'd run,
As in crowds of each sex it already has done;
Shou'd we grow cool and civil, why e'en let us part,
Nor strive to keep up a dull passion by art;
For 'tis folly, 'tis nonsense, our nature to force,
As spurring a jade only makes her the worse:
At formal restraint let us neither repine,
But give back my Heart, and I'll return thine.

DENIAL

(Anonymous. From *The Cupid*, 1736)

WHAT! put off with one denial?
And not make a second trial?
You might see my eyes consenting,
All about me was relenting:
Women, obliged to dwell in forms,
Forgive the youth who boldly storms.

Lovers, when you sigh and languish;
When you tell us of your anguish;
To the Nymph you'll be more pleasing,
When those sorrows you are easing;
We love to try how far men dare,
And never wish the foe shou'd spare.

IN CHLOE'S CHAMBER

(John Bancks, *Misc. Wks.*, i. 260; "the whole Tale, of which this is a Relick, consisted of about three Times as many Lines as are now left," 1738)

IN Chloe's Chamber, She and I
Together sat, on Creature nigh;
The Time and Place conspir'd to move
A Longing for the Joys of Love,
I sigh'd, and kiss'd, and press'd her Hand.
Did all—to make her understand.
She, pretty, tender-hearted Creature,
Obey'd the Dictates of Good-Nature,
As far as Modesty would let her.
A melting Virgin seldom speaks.
But with her Breasts, and Eyes and Cheeks:
Nor was it hard from These to find
That Chloe had—almost a Mind.
Thus far 'twas well; but, to proceed,
What should I do?—Grow bold—I did.—
At last she falter'd, What would'st have?—
Your Love, said I, or else my Grave.—
Suppose it were the first, quoth she,
Could you for-ever constant be?
For-ever Chloe, by those Eyes,
Those Bubbies, which so fall and rise,
By all that's soft, and all that's fair,
By your whole sacred Self, I swear,
Your fondest Wishes ne'er shall crave
So constant, so complete a Slave!
DAMON, you know too well the Art,
She sighing said, to reach my Heart!
Yet oh! I can't, I won't comply.—
Why will you press? dear DAMON why?

* * * * * * *

DESUNT CÆTERA

For Chloe, coming in one day,
As on my Desk the Copy lay;
What means this rhyming Fool? she cries,
Why some Folks may believe these Lies!
So on the Fire she threw the Sheet.
I burn'd my Hand—to save this Bit."

THE PROGRESS OF LOVE

(By James Oswald; a Broadside Song with music, c. 1740)

BENEATH the Myrtles secret Shade
When Delia blest my Eyes,
At first I viewed the lovely Maid
In silent soft surprise:
With trembling Voice, and Anxious Mind,
I softly whispered Love,
She blush'd a Smile so sweetly kind,
Did all my fears remove;
Did all my fears remove.

Her lovely yielding form I prest,
Sweet Maddening Kisses stole;
And soon her swimming Eyes confest,
The wishes of her Soul:
In wild tumultuous Bliss I cry,
O Delia now be kind,
She pressed me close and with a Sigh,
To melting joys resign'd;
To melting joys resign'd.

AN IMITATION OF OVID'S AMOURS

(By Matthew Prior, *Misc. Poems*, 1740)

CHLOE, since you a handsome woman are,
And consequently frail as you are fair,
Be not to any of my rivals coy,
But all the sweets of Liberty enjoy:
Through ev'ry various scene of loving rove,
And to the best your youth and charms improve;
I, all this freedom can with ease allow;
I meant not to confine you to a vow;

Provided that you act with secrecy,
And keep your jilting tricks concealed from me.
She sins not to the world who can deny,
And brazen out the rumour with a lie.
'Tis folly, nay, 'tis madness to reveal
That which you can but any way conceal.
You what the world would ne'er suspect proclaim,
And double by your impudence your shame.
The lewdest, bawdiest drab in all the town,
Will shut the door before she lays her down.
Is't not enough that fame proclaims your guilt,
But you, yourself, must tell, you are a jilt?
For your own sake be with your pleasure wise,
And sin at least under a chaste disguise.
Nay, if to me, your tricks should be betrayed,
Now they're all false, and that the world is mad;
Blush, weep, sigh, rage, and all your passions vent,
As if you did your injured fame lament:
And I shall fondly think your innocent.
When to some secret grotto you resort,
That love will suit, conceal the am'rous sport;
There then unmasked, let loose your fierce desire,
Inflame with every lecherous trick your fire,
Thy soul in its own native dress expose,
And what, without disguise, you are disclose;
Baulk nothing that can add to your delight,
But vigorously pursue love's pleasing fight.
Without a blush your folding arms, fast lock,
That links you closer, and improves the shock.
Your tongue in his in humid kisses dart,
And let each single member have a part.
As still your acting the soft scenes of love,
Your body in a thousand postures move;
Art does the dry insipid act advance,
And different motion does the bliss enhance.
All dying, amorous, soft expressions use,
Your melting looks new vigor will infuse,
But when you meet me, do not disabuse;
Hide with thy waving robe the rising blush,
By strong denial all suspicion crush,
'Til scandal's self confirm the general hush.
To me, to all the world thy truth declare,
That if deceived, unknowing I may err.
My dear credulity O ne'er destroy,
That paradise of fools let me enjoy.
But why! oh why! so often must I see
The billet sent, and brought again to thee?

Why deep indented, when I come, is seen
The couch without, the conscious bed within;
And ev'ry pot a witness of thy sin?
Why discompose the ringlets of thy hair,
Move them with sleep? Why all thy bosom bare,
And all the marks of love unprinted there?
Lost reputation though you may despise,
Set not at least your guilt before my eyes.
Consider me, if not your ruined fame;
To me 'tis death, to you what is not shame.
When you confess I feel the fatal pains,
And the chill'd blood creeps slowly through my veins,
But ah! in vain thy falsehood I would hate;
No; I must love thee, faithless and ingrate!
Even while I fly from thy destructive charms,
I wish myself expiring in thy arms,
O there conceal what I shall not inquire!
Each spark of jealousy wou'd soon expire.
Nay, wert thou taken in the guilty act,
And even these eyes were witness to the fact,
What well I saw, as well would'st thou deny,
And swear my sense imposed on me a lie,
My willing eyes their evidence should quit,
And all my soul in sorrow should submit.
Prepared to yield, how easy is thy task!
To say, 'tis false, is all that I can ask,
And since two words thy conquest may secure,
And since thy judge, if not thy cause, is sure,
At least be constant in a fixed denial;
Thy truth, my girl, shall never come on trial.

AN ODE TO LORD LINCOLN

(By Sir Charles Hanbury-Williams, 1744)

O LINCOLN! joy of womankind!
To you this humble ode's designed:
Let —— inspire my song:
Gods! with what powers are you endu'd!
Tiberius was not half so lewd,
Nor Hercules so strong.

'Tis —— now my pen employs,
And since I sing of heav'nly joys,
From heavenly notes I'll bring;

And tho' the lyric strain I chuse,
I'll open like the Mantuan muse—
"——, and the man I sing."

But don't expect much flattery
From such an honest bard as me,
Dear, noble, vigorous youth;
For when I say that you —— more
Than ever mortal did before,
You know I say the truth.

Four times a night, some happy fair,
You —— throughout the gliding year,
This course of joy pursuing;
Of feats like these what annals speak,
'Tis eight and twenty times a week,
And, Faith! that's glorious doing.

Had Messalina —— with you,
Whom no man then could e'er subdue,
Tho' many a Roman tried:
She'd own your vigour and your charms,
And, melting, lying in your arms,
Cry out —— "I'm satisfied!"

Then still love on with loosen'd reins,
While youth is boiling in your veins,
And sparkles in your face;
With whores be lewd, with whigs be hearty,
And both in ——, and in party,
Confess your noble race.

To you and steady Pelham then,
With joy I'll dedicate my pen,
For both shall be my theme
Since both divided England share,
You have the love of every fair,
He every man's esteem.

A LAMENTABLE CASE

(By Sir Charles Hanbury-Williams, 1744)

YE famed physicians of this place,
Hear Strephon's and poor Chloe's case
Nor think that I am joking;
When she would, he cannot comply,
When he wou'd drink, she's not a-dry;
And is not this provoking?

At night, when Strephon comes to rest,
Chloe received him on her breast,
  With fondly folding arms:
Down, down he hangs his drooping head,
Falls fast asleep, and lies as dead,
  Neglecting all her charms.

Reviving when the morn returns,
With rising flames young Strephon burns,
  And then, wou'd fain be doing:
But Chloe, now asleep or sick,
Has no great relish for the trick,
  And sadly balks his wooing.

O cruel and disastrous case,
When in the critical embrace
  That only one is burning!
Dear Doctors, set this matter right;
Give Strephon spirits over night,
  Or Chloe in the morning.

THE LOVER: A BALLAD

(By The Lady Mary Wortley Montague, c. 1758)

I.

AT length, by so much importunity pressed,
  Take, Congreve, at once, the inside of my breast:
This stupid indiff'rence so often you blame,
Is not owing to nature, to fear, or to shame.
I am not so cold as a virgin in lead,
Nor is Sunday's sermon so strong in my head:
I know but too well how time flies along,
That we live but few years, and yet fewer are young.

II.

But I hate to be cheated, and never will buy
Long years of repentance for moments of joy.
Oh! was there a man (but where shall I find
Good-sense and good-nature so equally joined?)
Would value his pleasure, contribute to mine;
Not meanly would boast, nor would lewdly design,
Not over severe, yet not stupidly vain,
For I would have the power, tho' not give the pain.

III.

No pedant, yet learned; nor rake-helly gay,
Or laughing, because he has nothing to say;
To all my whole sex obliging and free,
Yet ne'er be he fond of any but me;
In public preserve the decorum that's just,
And shew in his eyes he is true to his trust;
Then rarely approach, and respectfully bow,
But not fulsomely pert, or foppishly low.

IV.

But when the long hours of public are past,
And we meet with champagne and a chicken at last,
May ev'ry fond pleasure that moment endear;
Be banish'd afar both discretion and fear!
Forgetting or scorning the airs of the crowd,
He may cease to be formal, and I to be proud,
Till lost in the joy, we confess that we live,
And he may be rude, and yet I may forgive.

V.

And that my delight may be solidly fixed,
Let the friend and the lover be handsomely mixed,
In whose tender bosom my soul may confide,
Whose kindness can sooth me, whose counsel can guide,
From such a dear lover as here I describe,
No danger should fright me, no millions should bribe;
But till this astonishing creature I know
As I long have liv'd chaste, I will keep myself so.

VI.

I never will stare with the wanton coquet,
Or be caught by a vain affectation of wit.
The toasters and songsters may try all their art,
But never shall enter the pass of my heart.
I loathe the lewd rake, the dress'd fopling despise:
Before such pursuers the nice virgin flies:
And as Ovid has sweetly in parables told,
We harden like trees, and like rivers grow cold.

CHARLES VII AND AGNES SOREL

(By Voltaire. From *La Pucelle*. Translated by Ernest Dowson, 1899)

OUR good King Charles within his youthful prime
His revels kept at Tours, at Eastertime,
Where at a ball, (for well he loved to dance)
It so fell out, that for the good of France

He met a maid who beggared all compare,
Named Agnes Sorel, (Love had framed the fair).
Let your warm fancy youthful Flora trace,
Of Venus add her most enchanting grace,
The wood-nymph's stature and bewitching guise,
With Love's seductive air and brilliant eyes,
Arachne's art, the Syren's dulcet song,—
All these were hers and she could lead along
Kings, Heroes, Sages in her captive chain.
To see her, love her, feel the increasing pain,
Of young Desire, its growing warmth to prove,
With faultering utterance to speak of Love;
To tremble and regard with dove-like eyes,
To strive and speak and utter nought but sighs,
Her hand, with a caressing hand to hold,
Till panting all the flames her breast enfold;
By turns each other's tender pains impart,
And own the luscious thrill that sways the heart;
To please, in short, is just a day's affair
For Kings in love are swift and debonnaire.
Agnes was fain—she knew the art to please
To deck the thing in garb of mysteries,
Veils of thin gauze, through which will always pry,
The envious courtier's keen, malignant eye.
To mask this business, that none might know
The King made choice of Councillor Bonneau;
A trusty man of Tours, skilled in device
Who filled a post that is not over nice,
Which, though the court, that always seeks to lend
Beauty to all things, calls the Prince's friend,
The vulgar town and every rustic imp
Are grossly apt to designate a Pimp.
Upon Loire's banks thus worthy Sieur Bonneau
Stood seigneur of an elegant château,
Whither one day, about the time of shade,
In a light skiff fair Agnes was conveyed,
There the same night King Charles would fain recline
And there they supped, while Bonneau poured the wine.
State was dismissed, though all was served with care,
Banquets of gods could not with this compare!
Our Lovers their delight and joy confessed,
Desire inflamed and transport filled each breast,
Supremely formed by sprightly wit to please
Eager they listen and alternate gaze;
While their discourse, without indecence, free,
Gave their impatience fresh vivacity.
The ardent prince's eyes her charms devoured,

While in her ear soft tales of love he poured,
And with his knee her gentle knees deflowered.
The supper over, music played awhile,
Italian music—the chromatic style.
Flutes, hautboys, viols softly breathed around,
While three melodious voices swelled the sound;
They sang historic allegories, their strain
Told of those heroes mighty Love and slain,
And those they sang, who some proud Fair to please,
Quit fields of glory for inglorious ease.
In a recess this skilful band was set
Hard by the chamber where the good king ate;
As yet they sought their secret joys to screen
And Agnes fair enjoyed the whole unseen.
The moon upon the sky begins to glower;
Midnight has struck; it is Love's magic hour;
In an alcove begilt with art most sure,
Not lit too much and yet not too obscure,
Between two sheets of finest Holland made
The lovely Agnes' glowing charms were laid.
Here did Dame Alix leave her to repose;
But, cunning Abigail! forgot to close
The private door that ope'd an easy way
To eager Charles, impatient of delay.
Perfumes most exquisite, with timely care
Are poured already on his braided hair:
And ye, who best have loved, can tell the rest
The anxious throbbings of our monarch's breast
The sanctuary gained which shrines her charms,
In bed he clasps her naked to his arms,
Moment of ecstasy! propitious night!
Their hearts responsive beat with fond delight.
Love's brightest roses glow on Agnes' cheek;
In the warm blush, her fears and wishes speak.
But maiden fears in transport melt away,
And Love triumphant rules with sovran sway.
The ardent Prince now pressed her to his breast,
His eyes surveyed, his eager hands caressed,
Beauties enough which had been given her
To make a hermit an idolater.
Beneath a neck, whose dazzling whiteness shone
Pure and resplendent as the Parian stone,
With gentlest swell two breasts serenely move,
Severed and moulded by the hand of Love.
Each crowned wtih vermeil bud of damask rose,
Enchanting nipples, which ne'er know repose;

You seemed the gaze and pressure to invite,
And wooed the the longing lips to seek delight.
Ever complying with my reader's taste,
I meant to paint as low as Agnes' waist;
To show that symmetry, devoid of blot,
Where Argus' self could not discern a spot;
But Virtue, which the world good manners calls,
Stops short my hand:—and lo! the pencil falls.
In Agnes all was beauty, all was fair;
Voluptuousness, whereof she had her share,
Spurred every sense which instant took the alarm,
Adding new grace to every brilliant charm
It animated: Love can use disguise,
And pleasure heightens beauty in our eyes.

* * * * * * *

MONROSE AND AGNES SOREL

(By Voltaire. From *La Pucelle*. Translated by Ernest Dowson, 1899)

TRUE, I had sworn to moralize no more,
To narrate brief, avoiding long discourse,
But garrulous the God-head I adore,
And who is proof against Don Cupid's force?
His inspiration fires my fevered brain,
And my pen scribbles on the unequal strain.
Young beauties, maidens, widows, wives enrolled
Upon his charming banners' ample fold;
Ye who alike receive his flames or darts,
Now tell me, when two glowing youthful hearts,
Equal in talents, merit and in grace,
When both would court you in the fond embrace,
Pressing alike, and fanning rapture's fire,
Awakening in the breast each keen desire;
Does not a strange embarrassment ensue?

* * * * * *

More than the king, Monrose already knew,
And with address from prating pages drew
Full information where fair Agnes lay;
Discreetly reconnoitering his way,
Just as a cat when quiet lies the house,
Watches the stealthy passage of a mouse,
And stealing forth the feeble foe to meet,
Lets not the earth feel the impress of her feet,

But once in view upon the prey she springs;
Monrose alike impelled by love's own wings,
With arms extended onward cautious steals,
Planting the toes, and raising high the heels;
O Agnes! Agnes! in thy room he kneels.
Less quickly fly to amber lightest straws,
Less quickly steel obeys magnetic laws,
Than on his knees the bold Monrose we find
Beside the couch where the fond belle reclined.
For words they had nor leisure nor desire,
Sudden as thought bright blazed the amorous kiss,
Their half-closed mouths united straight in bliss;
Their dying eyes the tender fires disclose,
Their soul comes floating to their lips of rose;
Their lips, which kissing, closer contact seek
And eloquently thus their passion speak!
Mute intercourse, the language of desire,
Enchanting prelude, organ of love's fire:
Yet for a trice, 't was fitting to forget
This concert sweet, this exquisite duet.
Fair Agnes' hand assists to disengage
The cumbrous garments of the impatient page,
Who casts aside his troublesome attire,
Disguise averse to nature and desire,
To mortals in the golden age unknown,
Shunned by the God who still hath naked gone.
Ye Gods, what treasures! It is Flora say,
With Youthful Zephyrus in wanton play?
Or is it Psyche fair caressing Love?
Or is it Venus in the Idalian grove
Clips fast the boy afar from the emprise
Of garish day, while Mars is wrath and sighs?

THE HUSBAND-CONFESSOR

(From *Tales and Novels* of Jean de la Fontaine, 1764)

WHEN Francis (named the first) o'er Frenchmen reigned,
In Italy young Arthur laurels gained,
And oft such daring valour showed in fight,
With ev'ry honour he was made a knight;
The monarch placed the spur, upon his heel,
That all around his proper worth might feel.
Then household deities at home he sought,
Where—not at prayers his beauteous dame he caught.

He'd left her, truly, quite dissolv'd in tears;
But now the belle had bid adieu to fears;
And oft was dancing joyously around,
With all the company that could be found.

Gallants in crowds Sir Arthur soon perceived;
At sight of these the knight was sorely grieved;
And, turning in his mind how best to act;
Cried he, Can this be truly held a fact,
That I've been worthy, while I'd fame in view,
Of cuckoldom at home, and knighthood too?
It ought to be but half:—the truth let's know;
From constancy the purest blessings flow.
Then like a father-confessor he dressed,
And took his seat where priests their flock confessed.

His lady absolution sought that day,
And on her knees before him 'gan to pray;
The minor sins were told with downcast eyes,
And then for hearing those of larger size,
The husband-confessor prepared his ears:—
Said she, Good father ('mid a flood of tears),
My bed received, (the fault I fear's not slight,)
A gentleman, a parson, and a knight.
Still more had followed, but, by rage o'ercome,
Sir Arthur cut the thread, and she was mum;
Though, doubtless, had the fair been let proceed,
Quite long her Litany had been decreed.

The husband, in a rage, exclaimed, thou jade,
A parson, say'st thou? t' whom dost think thou'st made
This curst confession?—To my spouse, cried she,
I saw you enter here, and came with glee.
Supposing you'd a trick to raise surprise;
Howe'er, 'tis strange that one so very wise,
The riddle should not fully comprehend:—
A KNIGHT, the king created you, my friend;
A GENTLEMAN, your rank was long ago;
A PARSON, you have made yourself you know.

Good heavens! exclaimed the knight, 'tis very clear,
And I a blockhead surely must appear.

THE AVARICIOUS WIFE AND TRICKING GALLANT

(From the *Tales and Novels* of Jean de la Fontaine)

WHO knows the world will never feel surprise,
When men are duped by artful women's eyes;
Though death his weapon freely will unfold;
Love's pranks, we find, are ever ruled by gold.
To vain coquettes I doubtless here allude;
But spite of arts with which they're oft endued,
I hope to show (our honour to maintain),
We can, among a hundred of the train,
Catch one at least, and play some cunning trick:—
For instance, take blithe Gulphar's wily nick,
Who gained (old soldier-like) his ardent aim,
And gratis got an avaricious dame.

Look well at this, ye heroes of the sword,
Howe'er with wily freaks your heads be stored,
Beyond a doubt, at court I now could find,
A host of lovers of the Gulphar kind.

To Gasperin's so often went our wight,
The wife at length became his sole delight,
Whose youth and beauty were by all confessed;
But, 'midst these charms, such av'rice she possessed,
The warmest love was checked;—a thing not rare,
In modern times at least, among the FAIR.
'Tis true, as I've already said, with such
Sighs nought avail, and promises not much;
Without a purse, who wishes should express,
Would vainly hope to gain a soft caress.
The god of love no other charm employs,
Than cars, and dress, and pleasure's cheering joys;
From whose gay shops more cuckolds we behold,
Than heroes sallied from Troy's horse of old.

But to our Lad's humour let's adhere;
Sighs passed for nought:—they entered not her ear;
'Twas speaking only would the charmer please;—
The reader, without doubt, my meaning sees;
Gay Gulphar plainly spoke, and named a sum:
A hundred pound, she listened:—was o'ercome.
Our wight the cash by Gasperin was lent;
And then the husband to the country went,
Without suspecting that his loving mate,
Designed with horns to ornament his pate.

The money artful Gulphar gave the dame,
While friends were round who could observe the same,
Here, said the spark, a hundred pounds receive,
'Tis for your spouse:—the cash with you I leave.
The lady fancied what the swain had said,
Was policy, and to concealment led.

Next morn our belle regaled the arch gallant,
Fulfilled her promise:—and his eager want.
Day after day he followed up the game;
For cash he took, and int'rest on the same;
Good payers get, we always may conclude,
Full measure served, whatever is pursued.

When Gasperin returned, our crafty wight,
Before the wife addressed her spouse at sight;
Said he the cash I've to your lady paid,
Not having (as I feared) required its aid;
To save mistakes, pray cross it in your book;
The lady, thunderstruck, with terror shook;
Allowed the payment; 'twas a case too clear;
In truth for character she 'gan to fear.

But most howe'er she grudged the surplus joy,
Bestowed on such a vile, deceitful boy.

The loss was doubtless great in ev'ry view:—
Around the town the wicked Gulphar flew;
In all the streets, at every house to tell,
How nicely he had trick'd the greedy belle.

To blame him useless 'twere you must allow;
The French such frolics readily avow.

THE TWO FRIENDS

(By Jean de la Fontaine)

AXIOCHUS, a handsome youth of old,
And Alcibiades, (both gay and bold,)
So well agreed, they kept a beauteous belle,
With whom by turns they equally would dwell.

It happened, one of them so nicely played,
The fav'rite lass produced a little maid,
Which both extolled, and each his own believed,
Though doubtless one or t'other was deceived.

But when to riper years the bantling grew,
And sought her mother's foot-steps to pursue,
Each friend desired to be her chosen swain,
And neither would a parent's name retain.

Said one, why brother, she's your very shade;
The features are the same:—your looks pervade.
Oh no, the other cried, it cannot be:
Her chin, mouth, nose, and eyes, with yours agree;
But that as 'twill, let me her favours win,
And for the pleasure I will risk the sin.

THE PACK-SADDLE

(By Jean de la Fontaine)

A FAMOUS painter, jealous of his wife,
Whose charms he valued more than fame or life,
When going on a journey used his art,
To paint an ass upon a certain part,
(Umbilical, 'tis said) and like a seal:
Impressive token, nothing thence to steal.

A BROTHER brush, enamoured of the dame,
Now took advantage, and declared his flame:
The ASS effaced, but God knows how 'twas done;
Another soon howe'er he had begun,
And finished well, upon the very spot;
In painting, few more praises ever got;
But want of recollection made him place
A saddle, where before he none could trace.

The husband, when returned, desired to look
At what he drew, when leave he lately took.
Yes, see my dear, the wily wife replied,
The ASS is witness, faithful I abide.
Zounds! said the painter, when he got a sight,—
What!—you'd persuade me ev'ry thing is right?
I wish the witness you display so well,
And him who saddled it, were both in Hell.

THE DRESS-MAKER

(By Jean de la Fontaine)

A CLOISTERED nun had a lover
Dwelling in the neighb'ring town;
Both racked their brains to discover

How they best their love might crown.
The swain to pass the convent-door!—
No easy matter!—Thus they swore,
And wished it light.—I ne'er knew nun
In such a pass to be outdone:—
In woman's clothes the youth must dress,
And gain admission, I confess
The ruse has oft been tried before,
But it succeeded as of yore,
Together in a close barred cell
The lovers were, and sewed all day.
Nor heeded how time flew away.—
"What's that I hear? Reflection bell!
"'Tis time to part, Adieu!—Farewell!—
"How's this? exclaimed the abbess, why
"The last at table?"—"Madam, I
"Have had my dress-maker."—"The rent
"On which you've both been so intent
"Is hard to stop, for the whole day
"To sew and mend, you made her stay;
"Much work indeed you've had to do!
"—Madam, 't would last the whole night through,
"When in our task we find enjoyment
"There is no end of the employment."

A SONG

(By Mrs. Centlivre. From *The Platonick Lover*, 1761)

AS I walked forth one May morning,
I heard a pretty maid sweetly sing
As she sat under the cow a-milking,
Shall I be married a Tuesday;
I mun look smug upon Tuesday.

I prithee sweetheart what makes thee to marry,
Is your maidenhead grown a burden to carry?
Or are you afraid that you will mis-carry?
I prithee now tarry till Wednesday.

I pray, good sir, don't wish me such ill,
I've kept it these seven years against my own will;
I have made a vow, and I will it fulfill,
That I will be married on Tuesday,
So I mun look smug upon Tuesday.

On Tuesday morn it will be all my care
To powder my locks and to curl up my hair,
And two pretty maids for to wait on me there;
So I mun look smug on Tuesday,
So fine and so smug on Tuesday.

Then two young men to the church will me bring,
Where my husband will give me a gray gold ring,
But at night he will give me a far better thing.
So I mun look smug on Tuesday,
So fine and smug on Tuesday.

SONGS FROM PLAYS

(By Mrs. Centlivre, 1761)

THE devil a bit care I for a wife,
So I have but wine and a fire;
A wench when I please, my passion to ease,
The devil a wife I desire.

* * * * * * *

To gain all women there's a certain rule;
If wit should fail to please, then act the fool;
And where you find simplicity not take,
Throw off disguises, and profess the rake;
Observe which way their strongest humours run,
They're by their own lov'd cant the surest way undone.

* * * * * * *

Each trifling toy would tempt in times of old,
Now nothing melts a woman's heart like gold.
Some, bargains drive, others more nice than they,
Who'd have you think they scorn to kiss for pay;
To purchase them you must lose deep at play,
With several women, several ways prevail;
But gold's a certain way that—cannot fail.

CHASTE FLORIMEL

(From the Poems of Matthew Prior, 1765)

NO—I'll endure ten thousand deaths,
Ere any farther I'll comply;
Oh! sir, no man on earth that breathes
Had ever yet his hand so high!

Oh! take your sword, and pierce my heart,
  Undaunted see me meet the wound,
Oh! will you act a Tarquin's part
  A second Lucrece you have found.

Thus to the pressing Corydon,
  Poor Florimel, unhappy maid!
Fearing by love to be undone,
  In broken dying accents said.

Delia, who held the conscious door,
  Inspir'd by truth and brandy, smil'd,
Knowing that, sixteen months before,
  Our Lucrece had her second child.

And, hark ye! madam, cried the bawd,
  None of your flights, your high-rope dodging;
Be civil here, or march abroad;
  Oblige the squire, or quit the lodging.

Oh! have I—Florimel went on—
  Have I then lost my Delia's aid?
Where shall forsaken virtue run,
  If by her friends she is betrayed?

Oh! curse on empty friendship's name!
  Lord, what is all our future view!
Then, dear destroyer of my fame,
  Let my last succour be to you!

From Delia's rage, and fortune's frown,
  A wretched love-sick maid deliver!
Oh! tip me but another crown,
  Dear sir, and make me yours for ever.

PALLAS AND VENUS

(By Matthew Prior)

THE Trojan swain had judg'd the great dispute,
  And beauty's power obtain'd the golden fruit;
When Venus, loose in all her naked charms,
Met Jove's great daughter clad in shining arms.
The wanton goddess view'd the warlike maid
From head to foot, and tauntingly she said:
  Yield, sister; rival, yield: naked, you see,
I vanquish: guess how potent I should be,
If to the field I came in armour drest;
Dreadful, like thine, my shield, and terrible my crest!

The warrior goddess with disdain replied:
Thy folly, child, is equal to thy pride:
Let a brave enemy for once advise,
And Venus (if 'tis possible) be wise.
Thou to be strong must put off every dress;
Thy only armour is thy nakedness:
And more than once, (or thou art much belied)
By Mars himself that armour has been tried.

TO A YOUNG GENTLEMAN IN LOVE

(A Tale. By Matthew Prior)

FROM public noise and factious strife,
From all the busy ills of life,
Take me, my Celia, to thy breast,
And lull my wearied soul to rest.
For ever, in this humble cell,
Let thee and I, my fair one, dwell;
None enter else, but Love—and he
Shall bar the door, and keep the key.
To painted roofs, and shining spires
(Uneasy seats of high desires)
Let the unthinking many crowd,
That dare be covetous and proud:
In golden bondage let them wait,
And barter happiness for state.
But oh! my Celia, when thy swain
Desires to see a court again,
May Heaven around this destined head
The choicest of its curses shed!
To sum up all the rage of Fate,
In the two things I dread and hate;
Mayest thou be false, and I be great!
Thus, on his Celia's panting breast,
Fond Celadon his soul express'd;
While with delight the lovely maid
Receiv'd the vows, she thus repaid
Hope of my age, joy of my youth,
Blest miracle of love and truth!
All that could e'er be counted mine,
My love and life, long since are thine:
A real joy I never knew,
Till I believ'd thy passion true:
A real grief I ne'er can find,
Till thou prov'st perjur'd or unkind.

Contempt, and poverty, and care,
All we abhor, and all we fear,
Blest with thy presence, I can bear.
Through waters, and through flames I'll go,
Sufferer and solace of thy woe:
Trace me some yet unheard-of-way,
That I thy ardour may repay;
And make my constant passion known,
By more than woman yet has done.
  Had I a wish that did not bear
The stamp and image of my dear;
I'd pierce my heart through every vein,
And die to let it out again.
No; Vesus shall my witness be,
(If Venus ever lov'd like me)
That for one hour I would not quit
My shepherd's arms, and this retreat,
To be the Persian monarch's bride,
Partner of all his power and pride;
Or rule in regal state above,
Mother of gods, and wife of Jove.
  O happy these of human race!
But soon, alas! our pleasures pass.
He thank'd her on his bended knee;
Then drank a quart of milk and tea:
And leaving her ador'd embrace,
Hasten'd to court, to beg a place.
While she, his absence to bemoan,
The very moment he was gone,
Call'd Thyrsis from beneath the bed!
Where all this time he had been hid.

MORAL

While men have these ambitious fancies;
And wanton wenches read romances;
Our sex will—What? out with it. Lie;
And theirs in equal strains reply.
The moral of the tale I sing
(A posy for a wedding ring)
In this short verse will be confined:
Love is a jest, and vows are wind.

A SONG

(By Matthew Prior)

I.

FOR God's-sake-nay, dear sir,
Lord, what do you mean,
I protest, and I vow, sir,
Your ways are obscene.

II.

Pray give over, O! fie,
Pish, leave off your fooling.
Forbear, or I'll cry,—
I hate this rude doing.

III.

Let me die if I stay,
Does the devil possess you?
Your hand take away,
Then perhaps I may bless you.

SINCE WE YOUR HUSBAND DAILY SEE

(By Matthew Prior)

SINCE we your husband daily see
So jealous out of season,
Phillis, let you and I agree
To make him so with reason.

I'm vext to think, that every night
A sot, within thy arms,
Tasting the most divine delight,
Should sully all your charms;

While fretting I must lie alone,
Cursing the powers divine,
That undeservedly have thrown
A pearl unto a swine.

Then, Phillis, heal my wounded heart,
My burning passion cool;
Let me at least in thee have part
With thy insipid fool.

"WHEN FANNY TO WOMAN IS GROWING APACE"

(W. Yates, *New Songs, etc. Sung at Vauxhall,* No. 4 1765)

WHEN Fanny to woman is growing apace,
The rose-bud beginning to blow in her face,
For mamma's wise precepts she cares not a Jot,
Her heart pants for something—she cannot tell what.

No sooner the wanton her freedom obtains,
Than among the gay youths a tyrant she reigns;
And finding her beauty such power has got,
Her heart pants for something—she cannot tell what.

Tho' all day in splendor she flaunts it about,
At court, park, and play, the ridotto, and rout;
Tho' flatter'd and envy'd she pines at her lot,
Her heart pants for something—but cannot tell what.

A touch of the hand, or a glance of the eye,
From him she likes best makes her read to die;
Not knowing 'tis Cupid his arrow has shot,
Her heart pants for something—she cannot tell what.

Ye fair take advice, and be bless'd while you may;
Each look, word, and action, your wishes betray,
Give ease to your hearts by the conjugal knot,
Tho' they pant e'er so much—you'll soon know for what.

DICK AND KATE

(From *The Rattle,* 1766)

AS Kate was driving home her cows
Last May-day in the morning,
The birds sung sweetly on the boughs,
Bright Sol the hills adorning;
Dick overtook the rosy maid,
With love his bosom glowing,
He caught her round the waist, and said,
"How far, Kate, are you going?"

"I'm going homewards (she reply'd)
"Then, prythee, do not hold me,
"For should I here with you abide,
"My mother she will scold me."

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But Dick's bewitching artful tongue,
With pleasing words o'erflowing,
Soon gained its point, the maid was young,
And thought no more of going.

Beneath an oak's broad chequered shade
Young Cupid saw 'em seated;
And there sly Kate was not afraid
To grant all he entreated.
But while love's meadow, happy Dick,
With nature's scythe was mowing;
She smiling cry'd, just in the nick,
"How far are you now going?"

THE WAY TO WIN HER

(From *The Rattle*, by Durfey the Younger, *c.* 1766)

YE Swains who roam from fair to fair,
And strive each heart to bind,
Give ear to what I now declare
The precepts of a friend.
Would you in Venus wars succeed,
Of bashfulness be sure take heed,
And that's the Way to Win her.

When first you meet the blooming lass,
More ripe than peach or pear,
Let not the minutes idly pass,
Of dull delays beware:
With kisses sweet your flame confess,
Her panting snowy bosom press,
And that's the Way to Win her.

But should the crafty nymph prove coy,
Cry "fye, Sir, you are rude,"
Let not those arts your hopes destroy,
By nature all are lewd.
Then shilly shally never stand,
But boldly march up sword in hand
And that's the Way to Win her.

And when love's fire you have fann'd,
And she begins to melt,
And finds her virtue can't withstand
The raptures she has felt;
Then gently force her to the sport
With resolution storm the fort,
And that's the Way to Win her.

THE GROVE

(By John Oldmixon)

O'TIS sweet, 'tis wondrous sweet
When I and Amaryllis meet
In a fragrant shady grove,
Full of wishes, full of love.
O what pretty things we say!
How the minutes fly away!
When, with glances mingling kisses,
We prepare for softer blisses;
On some mossy bank we lie,
Play and touch, embrace and die;
Then from little feuds and jars
We proceed to amorous wars;
O how many heavens we find!
I am young and she is kind,
Kind and free without design,
Mine at will and only mine;
Smiling always, always toying,
Ever fond, yet never cloying.
Could the coldest hermit see
Half the sweets enjoyed by me;
Happy once to see her eyes,
Press her lips and hear her sighs,
Clasp her waist and touch her skin,
Soon he would forget the sin:
All his darling hopes of bliss
In a distant Paradise,
All with ease he would resign
For a minute's taste of mine.

A SONG

(Late 18th Century)

YOUNG I am and yet unskill'd
How to make a lover yield;
How to keep, and how to gain,
When to love, and when to feign.

Take me, take me some of you
While I yet am young and true;
Ere I can my soul disguise,
Heave my breasts, and roll my eyes.

Stay not till I learn the way
How to lie and to betray;
He that has me first, is blest,
For I may deceive the rest.

Could I find a blooming youth
Full of love, and full of truth,
Brisk, and of a jaunty mien,
I should long to be fifteen.

HOW CAN I KEEP MY MAIDENHEAD?

(Anonymous. 18th Cent.)

HOW can I keep my maidenhead,
My maidenhead, my maidenhead,
How can I keep my maidenhead,
Among sae mony men, O?

The Captain bad a guinea for't,
A guinea for't, a guinea for't;
The Captain bad a guinea for't,
The Colonel he bad ten, O.

But I'll do as my minnie did,
My minnie did, my minnie did;
But I'll do as my minnie did,
For siller I'll hae nane, O.

I'll gie it to a bonnie lad,
A bonnie lad, a bonnie lad;
I'll gie it to a bonnie lad,
For just as good again, O.

THE FICKLE MAID

(Anonymous. 18th Cent.)

FAIR, and soft, and gay, and young,
All charm! she played, she danced, she sung,
There was no way to 'scape the dart,
No care could guard the lover's heart,
Ah! why, cried I, and dropt a tear,
(Adoring, yet despairing e'er
To have her to myself alone)
Was so much sweetness made for one?

But growing bolder, in her ear
I in soft numbers told my care:
She heard, and rais'd me from her feet,
And seem'd to glow with equal heat.
Like heaven's, too mighty to express,
My joys could but be known by guess!
Ah! fool, said I, what have I done,
To wish her made for more than one?

But long I had not been in view,
Before her eyes their beams withdrew;
Ere I had reckon'd half her charms
She sank into another's arms.
But she that once could faithless be,
Will favour him no more than me:
He too will find himself undone,
And that she was not made for one.

THE PIPE OF LOVE

(From *Songs Comic and Satyrical*, by G. A. Stevens, 1782)

ONE primrose time, a maiden brown,
Wishing for what we will not say,
By side of shepherd sat her down,
And softly ask'd him, would he play?
Mild shone the sun through red-streak morn,
And glist'ning dew-drops pearled the grass;
The rustic, stretched beneath the thorn,
Grinning, reply'd—I'll please thee, Lass.

All on the greenfield's turfy bed,
Smiling, the fond one fell along;
The thick-leaf shade her face o'erspread.
While, lisping, she began this song:—
"'Tis love which gives life holidays,
"And Love, I'll always take thy part;
"My shepherd's pipe so sweetly plays,
"It finds the way to win my heart.

"The ladies dress'd with silks so fine,
"In golden chains to visits go;
"On costly dishes they can dine,
"And ev'ry night see ev'ry show;
"Yet, if 'tis true what I've heard speak,
"Those high degrees lead lonely lives;
"Husbands are wilful, husbands weak,
"And seldom pipe to please their wives."

Blue broke the clouds, the day yet young,
The flowers fragrant fill'd the breeze;
Wanton the lass, half whisp'ring, sung,
Yes, shepherd,—once more if you please.
Awaking from embrac'd delight,
She heard her dame, and dar'd not stay;
They kiss, they part, but first—at night,
She charg'd him come again and play.

His team to gear, home hy'd the loon,
The love-sheer'd lass blithe bore her pail,
And thus she gave her ditty tune,
Tripping it deftly down the dale;
"Tho' organ pipes play music fine,
"And fountain-pipes folks run to see;
"Tho' thirsty souls love pipes of wine,
"The pipe of love's the pipe for me."

MARIA

(From *Songs Comic and Satyrical*, by G. A. Stevens, 1782)

ONE day, by appointment, Maria I met,
That day of delight I remember it yet;
As the meadow we cross'd to avoid the town's crowd,
The sun seem'd eclips'd, by a black spreading cloud:
Escaping the shower, to barn we fast fled,
There safe heard the pattering rain overhead.

Some moments I suffer'd my fair to take breath,
Then, sighing, she cry'd, "Lord I'm frighted to death;
"Suppose nay, now, by any one I should be seen?
"Nay, nay, now,—nay, pray now—dear—what do you mean?
"Had I thought you wou'd be half so rude—fie! for shame!
"I wish I'd been wet to the skin e'er I came.

"You will have a kiss, then!—why, take one or two!
"I beg you won't tease me!—Lord! what wou'd you do?
"You'll tear all one's things—I ne'er saw such a man!
"I will hold your hands too!—Aye, do if you can:
"Is this your love for me? .Is this all you care?
"I'll never come near you again,—now, I swear!"

As she push'd me away, love explain'd by her eyes,
Resistance was only to heighten the prize;
Her face chang'd alternate, from scarlet to snow,
Her neck rose and fell fast, her language was low:
Such beauty! but more of that scene was not shown—
For Decency here bid her curtain drop down.

The storm being over, all sunshine the air,
When instant rose up, the yet love-looking fair,
Crying, hark! there's one listens—do look out, dear,
I must be bewitch'd, I am sure, to come here,
My things how they are rumpled!—Lord, let me be gone;
What have you been doing? and what have I done?

Into this fatal place, I most solemnly vow,
I innocent enter'd—but am I so now?
I'm ruin'd,—I never myself can forgive—
I'll leap in the brook,—for I'm sure I can't live!—
If I do, my whole life will be wasted in grief,
Unless here tomorrow you'll give me relief.

A LOVE SONG

(From *Songs Comic and Satyrical*, by G. A. Stevens, 1782)

LET him fond of fibbing invoke which he'll choose,
Mars, Bacchus, Apollo, or Madam the Muse;
Great names in the classical kingdom of letters
But poets are apt to make free with their betters.

I scorn to say aught, save the thing which is true,
No Beauties I'll plunder, yet give mine her due;
She has charms upon charms, such as few people may view,
She has charms,—for the tooth-ache, and eke for the ague.

Her lips; she has two, and her teeth they are white,
And what she puts into her mouth they can bite;
Black and all black her eyes, but what's worthy remark,
They are shut when she sleeps, and she's blind in the dark.

Her ears from her cheeks equal distance are bearing,
'Cause each side her head should go partners in hearing;
The fall of her neck's the downfall of beholders,
Love tumbles them in by the head and the shoulders.

Her waist is-so-so, so waste no words about it,
Her heart is within it her stays are without it;
Her breasts are so pair'd—two such breasts when you see,
You'll swear that no woman yet born e'er had three.

Her voice neither nightingales, no! nor canaries,
Nor all the wing'd warblers wild whistling vagaries;
Nor shall I to instrument music compare it,
'Tis likely, if you was not deaf you might hear it.

Her legs are proportion'd to bear what they've carry'd,
And equally pair'd, as if happily marry'd;
But wedlock will sometimes the best friends divide,
By her spouse so she's serv'd when he throws them aside.

Not too tall, nor too short, but I'll venture to say,
She's a very good size—in the middling way,
She's—aye—that she is,—she is all, but I'm wrong,
Her All I can't say, for I've sung All my song.

THE END

(From *Songs Comic and Satyrical*, by G. A. Stevens, 1782)

PAPILIO the rich, in the hurry of love,
Resolving to wed, to fair Arabell drove;
He made his proposals, he begg'd she would fix,—
What maid could say no to a new Coach-and-six?

We'll suppose they were wed, the guests bid, supper done,
The fond pair in bed, and the stocking was thrown:
The Bride lay expecting to what this wou'd tend,
Since created a wife, wish'd to know for what end.

On the velvet peach oft, as the gaudy fly rests,
The Bridegroom's lips stopp'd, on Love's pillows, her breasts:
All amazement, impassive, the heart-heaving fair,
With a sigh seem'd to prompt him don't stay too long there.

Round her waist, and round such a waist circling his arms,
He raptures rehears'd on her unpossess'd charms.
Says the fair one, and gap'd, I hear all you pretend,
But now for I'm sleepy, pray come to an end.

My love ne'er shall end, 'Squire Shadow reply'd,
But still unattempting, lay stretch'd at her side:
She made feints, as if something she meant to defend,
But found out, at last, it was all to no end.

In disdain starting up from the impotent boy,
She, sighing, pronounc'd, there's an end of my joy;
They resolv'd this advice to her sex she wou'd send,
Ne'er to wed till they're sure they can wed to some end.

And which end is that? why the end which prevails,
Ploughs, ships, birds, and fishes are steer'd by their tails:
And tho' man and wife for the head may contend,
I'm sure they're best pleas'd when they gain t'other end.

The end of our wishes, the end of our wives,
The end of our loves, and the end of our lives,
The end of conjunction, 'twixt mistress and male,
Tho' the head may design, has its end in the tail.

'Tis time tho' to finish, if ought I intend,
Lest, like a bad husband, I come to no end;
The ending I mean is what none will think wrong,
And that is, to make now an end of my song.

THE FIGHT

(From *Songs Comic and Satyrical*, by G. A. Stevens, 1782)

ONE ev'ning alone in the grove,
Miss sat on the side of the green,
She wonder'd at what they call Love,
And what it was marry'd folks mean.
"All night how I tumble and toss,
"Yet neither want manner nor means;
"Alas! must I live to my loss,
"And wither away in my teens?"

Young Rhodophil ran up the slope,
As if he some sport had in view;
She trembl'd, betwixt Fear and Hope,
Irresolute what she should do:
She saw him advance to her seat,
She saw him, but could not away;
Love fix'd a large weight to her feet,
Curiosity told her to stay.

Desire gave grace to his tongue,
As lovers to lovers will speak;
Enamour'd, he over her hung,
Then bow'd down his lips to her cheek:
He knelt, she attempted to rise,
Tho' 'twas but a feeble essay;
The wildness he wore in his eyes,
So scar'd her she fainted away.

DICK AND DOLL

(From *Convivial Songster*, 1782)

AS one bright summer's sultry day,
For sake of shade I sought the grove
Thro' thickset-hedge, on top of hay,
I met with mutual love.
A youth with one arm round his pretty girl's waist,
On small swelling-breasts he his other hand plac'd,
While she cry'd, Dick, be still,
Pray tell me what's your will?

"I come (quoth Dick) to have some chat,"
And close to hers his lips he squeez'd;
"I guess (cries Doll) what you'd be at,
But now I won't be teas'd."
She strove to rise up, but his strength held her down,
She called out for help! and petitioned the clown,
"O Dick—O dear—lie still!
You shall not have your will.

"I'll tear your soul out!—Lord these men!—
"If ever—well—I won't submit.
"Why?—what? she devil!—Curse me then!—
"You'll fling me in a fit!"
Down, like a bent lily, her head dropp'd aslant;
Her eyes lost the day-light, her breath became scant,
And feebly on her tongue
Expiring accents hung.

The chorus birds sang o'er their heads;
The breeze blew rustling thro' the grove;
Sweet smelt the hay, on new-mown meads:
All seem'd the scene of love.
Dick offer'd to lift up the lass as she lay;
A look, full of tenderness told him to stay.
"So soon, Dick, will you go?
"I wish—dear me!—heigh ho!"

Vibrating with heart-heaving sighs,
Her tucker trembling to and fro'
Her crimson'd cheeks, her glist'ning eyes,
Proclaim'd possession's glow.
Dick bid her farewell; but she lovingly cry'd,
As wanton she play'd by her fallen shepherd's side;
"A moment, pray sit still,
"Since now you've had your will."

"Lord! (cries the girl) you hasty men,
"Of love afford but one poor proof;
"Our fowls at home, each sparrow-hen,
"Are ten times better off."
Dick knew by her languishing what Dolly meant;
Once more view'd her beauties, and soon took the hint:
Her wishes to fulfill,
He let her have her will.

CHASTITY

(From *Songs Comic and Satyrical*, by G. A. Stevens, 1782)

I WONDER, quote Dame, as her Spouse she embraces,
How strumpets can look, how they dare show their faces,
And those wicked Wives who from Husbands' arms fly
Lord, where do they think they must go when they die?

But next day, by Husband, with 'Prentice Boy caught,
When she from the bed was to Toilet-glass brought,
Her head he held up, with this gentle Rebuke—
My Dear! you were wishing to know how Whores look!

Turn your eyes to that table, at once you will see
What faces Jades wear; then, my Dear, behold me
Your Features confess the Adultress clear,
My visage exhibits how Cuckolds appear.

You ask'd where bad Wives go? why, really, my Chick,
You must with the rest of them go to Old Nick!
If Belzebub don't such damned Tennants disown,
For bad Wives, he knows make a Hell of their own.

All the world would be wed, if the Clergy could show
Any rule in the service to change I for O:
How happy the Union of Marriage would prove,
Not long as we Live joined, but long as we Love.

At his feet she sunk down, Sorrow let her such Moans
That Resentment was gagged by her Tears and her Tones.
What could Hubby do then? what could then Hubby do?
But Sympathy struck, as she cried, he cried too.

O Corregio! could I Sigismunda design
Or exhibit a Magdalen, Guido, like thine,
I would paint the fond Look which the Penitent stole,
That pierced her soft Partner, and sunk to his Soul.

Transported to doating! he raised the Distressed,
And tenderly held her long time to his Breast;
On the Bed gently laid her, by her gently laid,
And the Breach there was closed the same way it was made.

THE WONDERFUL GROT

(Anonymous. From *New Crazy Tales*, 1783)

BENEATH a chalky cliff is found,
Nor in the air, nor on the ground
A Grot! There Cupid keeps his court.
There Venus and her nymphs resort.
Close shaded, it on pillars stands;
Pillars ne'er raised by mortal hands,
No marble can so polished show,
Whiter they than alpine snow,
From hence proceeds a magic dew,
That gives all things a glossy line
To glittering stars it gives their birth,
With dewy gems it spangles earth.
When that the precious nectar flows.

Sporting beneath fond zephyr glows.
On his glad wings aloft it flies,
And soaring twinkles o'er the skies.
O would it but unveil its face,
And with new light our dull world grace.
Deserted Sol would cease to shine,
Extinguished in a blaze divine.
O thither would the wanton tend,
And make that point his journey's end.
There would he revel, balk, and joy,
'Mongst blooming sweets that never cloy.
O 'tis so sweet, so mild, so gay,
As Autumn ripe, as wild as May.
'Tis sweeter than the flowers in June,
The saddest heart would put in tune.
Then sportive kids, than fauns, more gay:
The Gods themselves with it will play.
Than infants hushed it is more wild,
Yet sometimes pouting like a child;
And angry swells into a pet,
If it too scant allowance get;
And fondly mounting seems to say,
Ah, why my dear this long delay?

Most strange it is, a thing so wild,
Should choose a mate than storms more wild.
No barrier can his rage withhold,
As tigers fierce, as lions bold;
And let him have his head-strong way,
Like forward infants tired with play,
When of his wish he's quite possest
He'll nodding, sobbing, soundly rest.
He's of the gamesome merry kind,
But various like the changing wind.
His body's of a snowy line,
Neatly diversified with blue:
He's soft as silk, as hot as fire:
His very touch makes belles expire.

But, lo! he comes all blushing red,
As Phoebus hastes to Thetis' bed.
To meet, she obvious fain would go,
And speaks his welcome in dumb show:
And be he great, or be he small,
With eager love she clasps him all.
She greets him round with balmy kisses,
Fondly excites transporting blisses.
How close she presses,
Hugs and caresses:
To her he sighs his tender fears,
And, doomed to part, burst out in tears.

THE RAMBLERS

(Anonymous. From *New Crazy Tales*, 1783)

ONCE on a day when summer dressed the green,
And nought around but fragrant flowers were seen,
When golden Phoebus shot a gentle ray,
Olympus smiled and all the fields were gay.
Athwart the meads advanced a lovely pair,
Daphnis the young, and Rosalind the fair,
Of equal fortune both, of equal years,
Both warm in youth, and both devoid of cares,
With mutual ardour fired; as on they went,
The pleasing hours in amorous talk they spent.
The youth industrious to allure his love,
Brought every flower that bloomed in mead, or grove.
He culled the fairest to adorn her breast,
And fondly wished to be as closely pressed.

Now they arrive at the long wished for place,
Kind nature decked with a peculiar grace,
There cooling zephyrs found the opening glade,
There flowed a gentle stream, there rose an ambient shade.
As here they sat protected from the sun,
With a fond smile the loving youth begun.

"Beloved fair maid, how bounteous nature round,
With flowery gems bespangles all the ground;
Their birth to know, makes reasoning blockheads pause;
O blind to truth—productive love's the cause.
When the soft cloud descends in kindly showers,
And through the earth its genial moisture pours,
The juice prolific makes each bud appear,
And thence arise the glories of the year."

"The feathered wooers in the shady grove,
Fondly proclaim the energy of love,
The purling stream that flows beneath our feet,
Murmurs its love in melody so sweet.
Since then all things kind Venus' transports know,
Oh, why should we the pleasing talk forego?
O let us now, the precious time employ,
While whisp'ring nature prompts us on to joy."

Thus spoke the youth, and with a kiss instilled
The inviting passion—the warm virgin thrilled
In ev'ry vein—the ardour gains her heart;
But Miss must play the coy coquettish part.
Her heaving breasts with indignation swell;
She calls him villain, reprobate most fell.
The Phantom honor, starts before her eyes,
Rapid as lightning from the youth she flies.
He not to lose the conquest of the day,
Pursues the fair through every winding way.

At length she turns to make this stern reply;
"From whence, bold youth, take you this liberty?
Lost is my fame should we be seen alone."
Of fame she talks, and in a haughty tone,
The youth persists his fair one to implore:
She still denies, but he still urges more.

Cupid by chance lit near them in the grove,
And saw the fond contention of their love.
The partial God to Daphnis' succour flies,
Plies quick his bow, "Yield, yield fair maid," he cries,

Stricken she feels love's sharp resistless dart,
Sighs, falls, to Daphnis yields a willing heart,
Of conquest sure, the charmed, impatient boy,
Rushes, impetuous, to inviting joy.

Cupid around them draws a fragrant veil,
From prying eyes their raptures to conceal.
Soon as the endearments of their love were o'er,
And the God wafted to Idalia's shore,
Exposed to sight shone Rosalinda's charms;
The raptured youth lay panting in her arms.
Amazed they started as they heard me near:
He fled for shame, she cried, "Good sir, what cheer?"
Pray make no noise, for this is sacred ground,
I and my cousin have a bird's nest found.
Did'st meet him, sir, he's just about my age:
The bird belongs to him, but mine the cage."

Smiling, I heard, and smiling went away,
Pleased at the adventure of the sportful day.

THE QUESTION

(Anonymous. From *New Crazy Tales*, 1783)

TELL me, good doctor, what's the cause,
(You have studied nature's laws)
Why women, of one shape and feature,
So far should differ in their nature.
By nature here I do not mean
A temper eaten with the spleen;
No one whose happy soul's at ease,
And has no thought but how to please.
But what I mean is only this,
Why one delights in amorous bliss,
While t'other, who has equal charms,
A stranger is to love's alarms,
And talks of love with great despite
In which her sister takes delight?

To vouch the truth of what I say,
Two men I know both young and gay,
Who wearied of a single life,
Took each of them a lovely wife,
The daughters of a certain knight,
Alike in features, shape, and height;

I saw them married, put to bed
Each husband got a maidenhead
Next day the bridegrooms were content,
And I down to the country went.
Within a week I came to town,
And found my friends were both cast down;
I could not bear to see them so,
And to the one did frankly go,
And asked the reason of his grief,
He said, I'm ruined past relief.
You see, my wife's a lovely sight,
And formed to give a man delight;
Her eyes and face to love entice,
But, ah! my friend, she's cold as ice:
No joy she gives, no joy can feel,
Nor meets my love with equal zeal;
And spite of all her outward charms,
Like marble lies within my arms;
No calenture can warm her blood,
Nor thaw the dull, the stagnate flood.
Thus I am made a slave for life,
Tied to a fair, but joyless wife.

I left this friend in discontent,
And to the other straightway went;
I saw he was but ill at ease,
And kindly asked him his disease.
My friend, said he, then made a pause,
You see me sad and ask the cause;
From such a friend I'll nothing hide,
Cursed be the day I got a bride;
For tho' she is made up of charms,
And came a virgin to my arms,
Yet I am wearied of my life,
And wish I ne'er had got a wife;
She is so full of wanton play,
I get no rest by night or day;
Her youthful blood is still on fire,
She is all love and hot desire;
Her pulse beats high, her bosom heaves,
The more I do, the more she craves.
But when by her resistless charms,
She draws me to her eager arms,
She's with the joy transported quite,
And dies away in vast delight.
Last night I like a parson toiled,
But was, in spite of vigor, foiled;

I laid me down, and would have slept,
When to my breast she fondly crept.
And, giving me a burning kiss,
Begged that I would renew the bliss.

I asked her how she could support
The violence of amorous sport.
My life, said she, and squeezed my finger,
The more I'm thinged, I'm still the thinger.

THE ANSWER

Good sir, as for your natural question,
(A think, too true to make a jest on)
At present I decline the task,
'Tis you should answer, I should ask.
Some things there are, if I might quote them,
Which can never reach to bottom;
Too ticklish to be nearly touched,
You may in simile be couched.
Two fiddles lay, in size and frame
Alike, their wood and strings the same;
Them both by turns a minstrel tried,
And with the stick their bellies plied.
A clown stood by astonished much
How with the same apparent touch,
One sounded with melodious voice,
Whilst t'other made a jarring noise.
To him the minstrel thus; Thou dunderhead,
With as just cause thou might have wondered
At Winter's frost, or heat in June,
This fiddle here is out of tune.

Fiddles alone are not to blame,
The sticks must often take the shame;
Too feeble, short, or limber chosen,
And often fail for want of resin.

TO LYDIA

(By the Duke of Devonshire. From *The Festival of Love*, 1789)

LOVELY Lydia! lovely maid!
Either rose in thee's displayed;
Roses of a blushing red,
O'er thy lips and cheeks are shed:
Roses of a paly hue

In thy fairer charms we view.
Now thy braided hair unbind;
Now luxuriant, unconfined
Let thy wavy tresses flow;
Tresses bright, of burnished glow!
Bare thy ivory neck, my fair!
Now thy snowy shoulders bare:
Bid the vivid lustre rise,
In thy passion-streaming eyes;
See, the lucent meteors gleam!
See, they speak the wishful flame!
And how gracefully above,
Modelled from the bow of love,
Are thy arching brows displayed,
Soft'ning in a sable shade!
Let a warmer crimson streak
The velvet of thy downey cheek:
Let thy lips, that breathe perfume,
Deeper purple now assume:
Give me little billing kisses,
Intermixt with murmuring blisses.
Soft! my love!—my angel stay!—
Soft!—you suck my breath away:
Drink the life-drops of my heart;
Draw my soul from every part:
Scarce my senses can sustain,
So much pleasure, so much pain!
Hide thy broad voluptuous breast!
Hide that balmy heaven of rest!
See, to feast the enamoured eyes,
How the snowy hillocks rise,
Parted by the luscious vale,
Whence luxurious sweets exhale:
Nature framed thee but t'inspire,
Never-ending, fond desire!
Again, above its envious vest,
See, thy bosom heaves confest!
Hide the rapturous dear delight!
Hide it from my ravished sight!
Hide it!—for through all my soul
Tides of madd'ning transport roll:
Venting now the impassioned sigh,
See me languish, see me die!
Tear not from me then thy charms!
Snatch, oh, snatch me to thine arms!
With a life-inspiring kiss,
Wake my sinking soul to bliss!

ON LESBIA

(By Lord S——. From *The Festival of Love*, 1789)

WHEN beauteous Lesbia fires my melting soul,
(She, who the torch and bow from Cupid stole)
By many a smile, by many an ardent kiss;
And with her teeth imprints the tell-tale bliss:
Through all my frame the madd'ning transport glows,
Through every vein the tide of rapture flows,
As many stars as o'er heav'ns concave shine,
Or clusters as adore the fruitful vine;
So many blandishments, voluptuous joys,
To inflame my breast, the wily maid employs.
But dearest Lesbia! gentle mistress! say,
Why thus d'ye wound my lips in am'rous play.
With kisses, smiles, and every wanton art,
Why raise the burning fever of my heart?
Let us, my love! on yon soft couch reclined,
Each others arms around each other twined,
Yield to the pleasing force of strong desire;
And panting, struggling both at once expire!
For, oh, my Lesbia! sure that death is sweet,
Which Lovers in the fond contention meet!

CELIA VANQUISHED

(Anonymous. From *The Festival of Love*, 1789)

CELIA! you'll kill me, by the lord!
You know I've suffered like a martyr;
Nor have I yet had one kind word,
Nor seen an inch above your garter.

Can you forget, ungrateful maid,
How long my constant flame has lasted?
What nonsense have I sung and said,
What ink and paper have I wasted?

Ah, cruel nymph! you know full well,
With what a pure, becoming zeal
I've begged your snowy bosom's swell,
And every other swell to feel!

And round your taper waist to twine,
Each inlet of delight to prove!
Our hearts, our lips, our souls to join!
And can you still, still doubt my love?

What, unconvinced? the Devil's in it!
  Well then, this proof shall calm your fears,
And if the warm expressive minute,
  Speak not more love than days of tears.

Unless each palpitating nerve,
  Each kindling vein confess me true
Treat me at length as I deserve,
  And banish me from joy and you!

HYMN TO VENUS: FROM SAPPHO

(By Francis Fawkes. From *The Festival of Love*, 1789)

VENUS, bright Goddess of the skies,
  To whom unnumbered temples rise,
Jove's daughter fair, whose wily arts
Delude fond lovers of their hearts;
Oh, listen gracious to my prayer,
And free my mind from anxious care.

If e'er you heard my ardent vow,
Propitious goddess, hear me now!
And oft my ardent vow you heard,
By Cupid's friendly aid preferred,
Oft left the golden courts of Jove,
To listen to my tales of love.

The radiant car your sparrows drew;
You gave the word, and swift they flew,
Through liquid air they winged their way,
I saw their quivering pinions play:
To my plain roof they bore their queen,
Of aspect wild, and look serene.

Soon as you came by your command,
Back flew the wantoned, feathered band,
Then, with a sweet enchanting look,
Divinely smiling, thus you spoke;
"Why didst thou call me to thy cell?"
"Tell me, my gentle Sappho, tell."

"What healing medicine shall I find,
"To cure thy love-distempered mind?
"Say, shall I lend thee all my charms,
"To win young Phaon to thy arms?
"Or does some other swain subdue
"Thy heart? my Sappho, tell me who?

"Though now, averse, thy charms he flight,
"He soon shall view thee with delight:
"Though now he scorns thy gifts to take,
"He soon to thee, shall offerings make;
"Though now thy beauties fail to move,
"He soon shall melt with equal love."

Once more, O Venus! hear my prayer,
And ease my mind of anxious care;
Again vouchsafe to be my guest,
And calm this tempest in my breast!
To THEE bright queen, my vows aspire;
O grant me all my heart's desire!

AN ANSWER

(Anonymous. From *The Festival of Love*, 1789)

BE quiet, Sir! begone, I say!
Lord bless us! How you romp and tear!
There!
I swear!
Now you left my bosom bare!

I do not like such boisterous play,
So take that saucy hand away——
Why now, you're ruder than before!
Nay. I'll be hanged if I comply——
Fie!
I'll cry!
Oh—I can't bear it—I shall die!
I vow I'll never see you more!
But—are you sure you've shut the door?

A LOGICAL SONG

(Anonymous. From *The Festival of Love*, 1789)

WHY, Chloe, thus squander your prime!
In debate between fear and temptation?
If adulterous love be a crime,
Why quarrel with plain fornication?

But your beauties with age you may lose;
Then seize the short moment of joy!
If not—then with confidence use,
What by using you cannot destroy.

Come, come, bid our transports begin,
  Ere we lose both our youth and our leisure
Come, 'tis better repenting a sin,
  Than regretting loss of a pleasure.

THE GERANIUM

(By Richard Brinsley Sheridan, 1789)

IN the close covert of a grove,
  By nature formed for scenes of love,
Said Susan in a lucky hour,
Observe yon sweet geranium flower;
How straight upon its stalk it stands,
And tempts our violating hands:
Whilst the soft bud as yet unspread,
Hangs down its pale declining head:
Yet, soon as it is ripe to blow,
The stems shall rise, the head shall glow.
Nature, said I, my lovely Sue,
To all her followers lends a clue;
Her simple laws themselves explain,
As links of one continued chain;
For her the mysteries of creation,
Are but the works of generation:
Yon blushing, strong, triumphant flower,
Is in the crisis of its power:
But short, alas! its vigorous reign,
He sheds his seed, and drops again;
The bud that hangs in pale decay,
Feels not, as yet, the plastic ray;
To-morrow's sun shall bid him rise,
Then, too, he sheds his seed and dies:
But words, my love, are vain and weak,
For proof, let bright example speak;
Then straight before the wondering maid,
The tree of life I gently laid;
Observe, sweet Sire, his drooping head,
How pale, how languid, and how dead;
Yet, let the sun of thy bright eyes,
Shine but a moment, it shall rise;
Let but the dew of thy soft hand
Refresh the stem, it straight shall stand:
Already, see, it swells, it grows,
Its head is redder than the rose,

Its shrivelled fruit, of dusky hue,
Now glows, a present fit for Sue:
The balm of life each artery fills,
And in o'erflowing drops distils.
Oh me! cried Susan, when is this?
What strange tumultous throbs of bliss!
Sure, never mortal, till this hour,
Felt such emotion at a flower:
Oh, serpent! cunning to deceive,
Sure, 'tis this tree that tempted Eve;
The crimson apples hang so fair,
Alas! what woman could forbear?
Well, hast thou guessed, my love, I cried,
It is the tree by which she died;
The tree which could alone content her,
All nature, Susan, seeks the centre;
Yet, let us still, poor Eve forgive,
It's the tree by which we live;
For lovely woman still it grows,
And in the centre only blows.
But chief for thee, it spreads its charms,
For paradise is in thy arms.—
I ceased, for nature kindly here
Began to whisper in her ear:
And lovely Sue, lay softly panting,
While the geranium tree was planting.
'Til in the heat of amorous strife,
She burst the mellow tree of life.
"Oh, heaven!" cried Susan, with a sigh,
"The hour we taste,—we surely die;
Strange raptures seize my fainting frame,
And all my body glows with flame;
Yet let me snatch one parting kiss
To tell my love I die with bliss:
That pleased, thy Susan yields her breath;
Oh! who would live if this be death!"

THE HONEYMOON

(Anonymous. From *The Festival of Love*, 1789)

COME, Cytherea, with thy doves,
And all thy train of little loves,
Come from Idalia's pleasing shade,
For joy and amorous frolics made;
Come, and assist an artless tune
Which strives to warble forth the Honey-moon.

When Hymen does the pair unite,
And promises supreme delight;
With sparkling torch comes bright to view,
And points at raptures great and new:
What pleasure is expected soon!
Then, then! comes on the pleasing Honey-moon.

Cynthia, the virgin goddess bright,
With greater speed rides down the night;
Her modesty betrays her heart,
Shows in such sports she'd take a part;
But that her wish she dares not own
Or Jove with her would have an Honey-moon.

"An Honey-moon!" cries simpering miss,
"I wonder much what's meant by this!
I have all sweets quite near me, handy,
Is Honey-moon like sugar-candy?"
The joyful time will tell you soon,
When you will bless the Honey-moon.

Ah! then those sweets, unknown before,
Will make you long, dear miss, for more;
Will make you lick your lips, and cry
"Till now, O what a fool was I!
What pleasing touches!—what a tune
Can e'er be played that's like a Honey-moon?"

Could but the virgin in her teens,
Tell what the joys of wedlock means;
She would not long the bliss delay,
But with the first dear youth away;
On Venus' bed would tumble down,
And there prolong the Honey-moon.

When heaving breasts delightful rise,
And pant with soft ecstatic sighs!
When folding arms fond arms embrace,
And love seems furious for the chase;
Unnumbered joys the pair must crown,
Who then begin the pleasing Honey-moon.

Ah! then encounter breast with breast,
And tenderest accents are expressed;
"My love, I melt! I burn! I burst!"
The next is better than the first;
And so progressive they go on,
To make a heaven of their Honey-moon.

Then all the youthful poet's dream,
Beneath the shade, or by the stream,
Is realized, and certain found,
Beyond imagination's bound;
All that can please is felt, or shown
During the happy time of Honey-moon.

Then haste, ye youths, and haste ye fair,
Love's banquet of delight to share;
Advance to Hymen's sacred fane,
A rich reward you'll surely gain;
Each rapture will attend you soon,
And give you all the joys of Honey-moon.

THE WILLING MAID, A DAY TOO YOUNG

(From *A Choice Garland*, c. 1790)

AS I was walking one May Morning,
I leaned my back up to a tree,
There I was aware of a pretty young maid,
Come tripping over the lee to me.

She was as fair to look upon,
As any pretty maid under the sun,
I asked her then how she was,
But she smiled and said I'm a day too young.

I am too young to be your bride,
I am too young to lie by your side,
It will bring disgrace to all my kin,
Therefore my love you ne'er shall win.

He clasped her round the middle so small,
And gently laid her on the ground,
It was once or twice he served her so,
And he found she was not a day too young.

Now, kind sir, you have had your will
And robbed me of my virginity,
O pray young man come tell to me,
When our wedding day must be.

My wedding day does not trouble me,
I ne'er intend to marry thee,
Of all the pastime we have had,
You have had your share as well as me.

As you have brewed so you must bake,
And draw your ale when it is new,
Go carry your baby home to your mam,
And tell her you were not a day too young.

I wish to God my babe was born,
And smiling on his daddy's knee,
And I myself laid in my grave,
And the green grass growing over me.

ANNA

(By Robert Burns. From *Merry Muses of Caledonia*, c. 1800)

YESTREEN I had a pint o' wine,
A place where body saw na;
Yestreen lay on this breast of mine,
The raven locks of Anna.

The hungry Jew, in wilderness,
Rejoicing o'er his manna,
Was naething to my hinny bliss,
Upon the lips of Anna.

Ye monarchs take the east and west,
Frae Indus to Savannah;
Gie me within my straining grasp,
The melting form of Anna.

Then I'll despise Imperial charms,
An Empress or Sultana;
While dying raptures in her arms,
I give and take with Anna.

Awa thou flaunting God of Day!
Awa thou pale Diana!
Ilk star gae hide thy twinkling ray,
When I'm to meet my Anna.

Come in thy raven-plumage, Night,
Sun, moon and stars withdrawn a'!
An' bring an angel-pen to write
My transports wi' my Anna.

POSTSCRIPT

The kirk and state may join and tell
  To do sic things I manna;
The kirk and state may gae to hell,
  An' I shall gae to Anna.

She is the sunshine o' my ee',
  To live but her I canna;
Had I on earth but wishes three,
  The first should be my Anna.

SODGER LADDIE

(By Robert Burns. From *The Jolly Beggars*)

I ONCE was a maid, tho' I cannot tell when,
  An' still my delight is in proper young men;
Some one of a troop of dragoons was my daddie,
No wonder I'm fond of a sodger laddie.

The first of my loves was a swagg'rin' blade,
To rattle the thundering drum was his trade;
His leg was so tight, and his cheek was so ruddy,
Transported I was with my sodger laddie.

But the godly old chaplain left him in the lurch,
The sword I forsook for the sake of the church,
He ventur'd the soul, and I risk'd the body,
'Twas then I proved false to my sodger laddie.

Full soon I grew sick of my sanctified sot.
The regiment at large for a husband I got;
From the gilded spontoon to the life I was ready,
I asked no more but a sodger laddie.

But the peace it reduc'd me to beg in despair,
Till I met my old boy at a Cunningham fair;
His rags regimental they flutter'd so gaudy,
My heart it rejoic'd at my sodger laddie.

An' now I have liv'd—I know not how long,
An' still I can join in a cup or a song;
But whilst with both hands I can hold the glass steady,
Here's to thee, my hero, my sodger laddie.

WHISTLE O'ER THE LAVE O'T

(By Robert Burns. From *The Jolly Beggars*)

LET me ryke up to dight that tear,
An' go wi' me to be my dear,
An' then your every care and fear
May whistle owre the lave o't.
I am a fiddler to my trade,
And a' the tunes that e'er I play'd,
The sweetest still to wife or maid,
Was "Whistle owre the lave o't."

At kirns and weddings we'se be there,
An' O! sae nicely's we will fare;
We'll bouse about, till Daddie Care
Sings whistle o'er the lave o't.
I am a fiddler to my trade, &c.

Sae merrily's the banes we'll pyke,
An' sun oursel's about the dyke,
An' at our leisure, when ye like,
We'll whistle o're the lave o't.
I am a fiddler to my trade, &c.

But bless me wi' your heaven o' charms,
And while I kittle hair on thairms,
Hunger, cauld, an' a' sic harms,
May whistle owre the lave o't.
I am a fiddler to my trade, &c.

I AM A BARD

(By Robert Burns. From *The Jolly Beggars*)

I AM a bard of no regard,
Wi' gentle folks, an' a' that;
But Homer-like, the glowrin' byke,
Frae town to town I draw that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
An' twice as muckle's a' that;
I've lost but ane, I've twa behind',
I've wife eneugh for a' that.

I never drank the Muse's stank,
Castaglia's burn, an' a' that;
But there it streams, and richly reams,
My Helicon I ca' that.
For a' that, an' a' that, &c.

Great love I bear to a' the fair,
Their humble slave, an' a' that;
But lordly Will, I hold it still
A mortal sin to thraw that.
For a' that, an' a' that, &c.

In rapture sweet, this hour we meet,
Wi' mutual love an' a' that;
But for how lang the flie may stang,
Let inclination law that.
For a' that, an' a' that, &c.

Their tricks and craft hae put me daft,
They've ta'en me in, an' a' that;
But clear the decks, and here's the sex,
I like the jades for a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that, &c.

GIE THE LASS HER FAIRIN'

(By Robert Burns in *Merry Muses of Caledonia*, c. 1800)

O GIE the lass her fairin', lad,
O gie the lass her fairin',
An' something else she'll gie to you,
That's wallow worth the wearin';
Syne coup her o'er amang the creels,
When ye hae ta'en your brandy,
The mair ye bang, the mair she squeels,
An' hey for houghmagandie.

Then gie the lass her fairin', lad,
O gie the lass her fairin',
An' she'll gie you a hairy thing,
An' of it be na sparin';
But lay her o'er amang the creels,
An' bar the door wi' baith your heels,
The mair she gets, the mair she squeals,
An' hey for houghmagandie.

THE BOWER OF BLISS

(An old Scots countryside song. From *The Merry Muses of Caledonia* (c. 1800), collected by Robert Burns)

WHILST others to thy bosom rise
And paint the glories of thine eyes;
Or bid thy lips and cheeks disclose
The unfading bloom of Eden's rose;
Which fell, not fear we most admire,
Less obvious charms, not less divine,
I sing that lovely bower of thine.

Rich gems worth India's wealth alone,
How much pursued, how little known;
Tho' rough its face, tho' dim its hue,
It soils the lustre of Peru.
The vet'ran such a prize to gain,
Might all the toils of war sustain;
A devotee forsake his shrine
To venerate that bower of thine.

When the stung heart feels keen desire,
And through each vein pours liquid fire;
When with flush'd cheeks and burning eyes,
Thy lover to thy bosom flies;
Believe, dear maid, believe my vow,
By Venus' self, I swear, 'tis true,
More bright the higher beauties shine,
Illum'd by that strange bower of thine.

What thought sublime, what lofty strains
Its wondrous virtues can explain?
No place, howe'er remote, can be
From its intense attraction free.
Tho' more elastic far than steel,
Its force ten thousand needles feel;
Pleas'd their high temper to resign
In that magnetic bower of thine.

Irriguous vale, embrown'd with shades,
Which no intrinsic storm pervades!
Soft clime, where native summer glows,
And nectar's living current flows!
Not Tempe's vale, renoun'd of yore,
Of charms could boast such endless store;
More than Elysian sweets combine
To grace that smiling bower of thine?

O may no rash invader stain
Love's warm, sequestered virgin fane!
For me alone let gentle fate
Reserve the dear august retreat!
Along its banks when shall I stray?
Its beauteous landscape when survey?
How long in fruitless anguish pine
Nor view unveil'd that bower of thine?

O! let my tender trembling hand
The awful gate of life expand!
With all its wonders feast my sight)
Dear prelude to immense delight!
Till plung'd in liquid joy profound,
The dark unfathom'd deep I sound;
All panting on thy breast recline,
And, murmuring, bless that bower of thine.

JOCKEY WAS A BONNY LAD

(An old Scots countryside song. From *The Merry Muses of Caledonia* (c. 1800), collected by Robert Burns).

MY Jockey is a bonny lad,
A dainty lad, a merry lad,
A neat sweet pretty little lad,
An' just the lad for me.
For when we o'r the meadows stray,
He's ay sae lively, ay sae gay,
An' aft right canty does he say
There's nane he loes like me.
An' he's ay huggin', ay dawtin',
Ay clappin', ay pressin',
Ay squeezin', ay kissin',
An' winna let me be.

I met my lad the ither day,
Friskin' thro' a field o' hay,
Sayes he, "Dear Jenny, will ye stay
"An' crack a while wi' me?"
"Na, Jockey lad, I darena stay,
"My mither she'd miss me away,
"Syne she'll flyte an' scauld a' day,
"An' play she deil wi' me."
But Jockey still continued
Huggin', dawtin', clappin', squeezin', &c.

"Hoot! Jockey, see my hair is down,
"An' look, you've torn a' my gown,
"An' how will I gae thro' the town?
"Dear laddie, tell to me."
He never minded what I said,
But wi' my neck an' bosom play'd;
Tho' I entreated, begg'd an' pray'd
Him no to touzle me.
But Jockey still continued
Huggin', dawtin', clappin', squeezin',
An' ay kissin', kissin', kissin',
Till down cam we.

As breathless an' fatigued I lay
In his arms among the hay,
My blood fast thro' my veins did play
As he lay huggin' me;
I thought my breath would never last,
For Jockey danc'd sae devilish fast;
But what cam o'e, I trow, at last,
There's deil ane kens but me.
But soon he wearied of his dance,
O' a' his jumpin' an' his prance,
An' confess'd without romance,
He was fain to let me be.

THE FORNICATOR

(By Robert Burns. From *The Merry Muses of Caledonia*)

YOU Jovial boys who love the joys,
The blessfu' joys of lovers;
An' dare avow't wi' daintless brow,
Whate'er the lass discovers;
I pray draw near, and you shall hear,
An' welcome in a frater,
I've lately been on quarantine,
A proven Fornicator.

Before the congregation wide,
I past the muster fairly;
My handsome Betsey by my side,
We gat our ditty rarely.
My downcast eye, by chance did spy,
What made my mouth to water,
Those limbs sae clean, where I between
Commenced Fornicator.

Wi' rueful face and signs o' grace,
I paid the buttock hire;
The night was dark, and thro' the park
I cou'dna but convoy her;
A parting kiss, what cou'd I less,
My vows began to scatter;
Sweet Betsey fell, fal lal de ral!
I am a Fornicator.

But, by the sun an' moon I swear,
An' I'll fulfil ilk hair o't,
That while I own a single crown,
She's welcome to a share o't;
My rouguish boy, his mother's joy,
An' darling of his pater,
I for his sake the name will take,
A harden'd Fornicator.

THE YELLOW, YELLOW YORLIN'

(An old Scots countryside song. From *The Merry Muses of Caledonia* (c. 1800), collected by Robert Burns)

IT fell on a day, in the flow'ry month o' May,
All on a merry, merry mornin',
I met a pretty maid, an' unto her I said,
"I wad fain fin' your yellow, yellow yorlin."

"O no, young man," says she, "you're a stranger to me,
"An' I am anither man's darlin',
"Wha has baith sheep an' cows, that's feedin' in the hows,
"An' a cock for my yellow, yellow yorlin'."

"But, if I lay you down upon the dewy ground,
"You wad na be the waur ae farthin',
"An' that happy, happy man, he never cou'd ken
"That I play'd wi' your yellow, yellow yorlin'."

"O fie, young man," says she, "I pray you let me be,
"I wad na for five pounds sterling;
"My mither wad gae mad, an' sae wad my dad,
"If you play'd with my yellow, yellow yorlin'."

But I took her by the waist, an' laid her down in haste,
For a' her squeakin' an' squallin',
The lassie soon grew tame, an' bade me come again
For to play wi' her yellow, yellow yorlin'.

GODLY GIRZIE

(By Robert Burns. From *The Merry Muses of Caledonia*)

THE night it was a holy night,
The day had been a holy day;
Kilmarnock gleam'd wi' candle light,
As Girzie hameward took her way,
A man of sin, ill may he thrive!
And never holy meeting see!
With godly Girzie met belyve,
Amang the Craigie hills sae hie.

The chiel' was wight, the chiel' was stark,
He wad na wait to chap nor ca',
And she was faint wi' holy wark,
She had no pith to say him na.
But ay she glowr'd up to the moon,
And ay she sigh'd most piouslie,
"I trust my heart's in heaven aboon,
"Whare'er your sinfu' pintle be."

JOHN ANDERSON, MY JO

(From *The Masque* (2nd ed., p. 292); also in *Merry Muses of Caledonia;* collected and retouched by Robert Burns)

JOHN ANDERSON, my jo, John,
I wonder what ye mean,
To lie sae lang i' the mornin',
And sit sae late at e'en?
Ye'll bleer a' your een, John,
And why do ye so?
Come sooner to your bed at e'en,
John Anderson, my jo.

John Anderson, my jo, John,
When first that ye began,
Ye had as good a tail-tree
As ony ither man;
But now it's waxen wan, John,
And aft requires my helping hand,
John Anderson, my jo.

When we were young and yauld, John,
We've lain out-owre the dyke,
And O! it was a fine thing
To see your hurdies fyke;—

To see your hurdies fyke, John,
  And strike the risin' blow;
'Twas then I lik'd your chanter-pipe,
  John Anderson, my jo.

John Anderson, my jo, John,
  You're welcome when you please;
It's either in the warm bed,
  Or else aboon the claes.
Do ye your part aboon, John,
  And trust to me below;
I've twa gae-ups for your gae-down,
  John Anderson, my jo.

When ye come on before, John,
  See that ye do your best;
When I begin to haud ye,
  See that ye grip me fast;
See that ye grip me fast, John,
  Until that I cry "Oh!"
Your back shall crack, or I do that,
  John Anderson, my jo.

I'm backet like a salmon,
  I'm breastit like a swan;
My wyme is like a down-cod,
  My waist ye weel may span;
My skin frae tap to tae, John,
  Is like the new fa'n snow,
And it's a' for your conveniency,
  John Anderson, my jo.

WHA IS THAT AT MY BOWER DOOR?

(By Robert Burns)

WHA is that at my bower-door?
  O wha is it but Findlay.
Then gae your gate, ye'se nae be here!
  Indeed maun, I quo' Findlay.
What makes ye sae like a thief?
  O come and see, quo' Findlay;
Before the morn ye'll work mischief;
  Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.

Gif I rise an' let you in;
  Let me in, quo' Findlay;
Ye'll keep me waukin' wi' your din,
  Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.
In my bower, if you should stay?
  Let me stay, quo' Findlay;
I fear ye'll bide till break o' day;
  Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.

Here this night, if ye remain,
  I'll remain, quo' Findlay;
I dread ye'll learn the gate again,
  Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.
What may pass within this bower,
  Let it pass, quo' Findlay;
Ye maun conceal till your last hour;
  Indeed will I, quo' Findlay!

THE LASS THAT MADE THE BED FOR ME

(By Robert Burns. From *Johnson's Museum*, 1796)

WHEN Januar' wind war blawin' cauld,
  As to the north I took my way.
The mirksome night did me enfauld,
  I knew not where to lodge till day;
But by good luck a maid I met,
  Just in the middle o' my care,
And kindly she did me invite
  To walk into her chamber fair.

I bowed fu' low unto this maid,
  And thanked her for her courtsie;
I bowed fu' low unto this maid,
  An' bade her make a bed to me;
She made the bed baith large and wide,
  Wi' twa white hands she spread it doun;
She put the cup to her rosy lips,
  And drank—"Young man, now sleep ye soun."

Chorus:
The bonnie lass made the bed to me,
  The braw lass made the bed to me,
I'll ne'er forget till the day I die,
  The lass that made the bed for me.

She snatch'd the candle in her hand,
And frae my chamber went wi' speed;
But I called her quickly back again,
To lay some mair below my head;
A cod she laid below my head,
And served me with due respect,
And, to salute her wi' a kiss,
I put my arms about her neck.

"Haud off your hands, young man!" she said,
"And dinna sae uncivil be;
Gif ye hae any Love for me,
O wrang na my virginitie."
Her hair was like the links of gowd,
Her teeth were like the ivorie,
Her cheeks like lillies dipt in wine,
The lass that made the bed to me.

Her bosom was the driven snaw,
Twa drifted heaps sae fair to see;
Her limbs the polished marble stane,
The lass that made the bed to me.
I kiss'd her o'er and o'er again,
And ay she wist na what to say;
I laid her 'tween me and the wa',
The lassie thocht na lang till day.

Upon the morrow when we rose,
I thanked her for her courtesie;
But aye she blushed and aye she sigh'd,
And said, "Alas, ye've ruin'd me."
I clasp'd her waist, and kiss'd her—
While the tear stood twinkling in her e'e;
I said, "My lassie, dinna cry,
For ye ay shall make the bed for me."

She took her mither's holland sheets,
And made them a' in sarks to me.
Blythe and merry may she be,
The lass that made the bed to me.

TOO COLD TO LIE ALONE

(From *Ane Pleasant Garden* (c. 1800); edited by C. Kirkpatrick Sharpe).

DEAREST Jenny, thou must love me,
Troth, my bonny lad, I do;
Since thou says so, come I'll prove thee,
Dearest thou must kiss me too.

Take a kiss or two, my own dear Jockie,
For more I dare give none, I trow;
Fush, quoth he, be not unlucky,
Pray, wed me first and all will do.

Not for all Fife and lands about it,
I'll ne'er wed for to be bound,
Neither can I live without thee
For five hundred thousand pound.
Then thou will die if I forsake thee,
Better die as be undone;
Since thou says so, come I'll take thee,
It's too cold to lie alone.

THE WEE ONE

(From *Ane Pleasant Garden* (c. 1800); edited by C. Kirkpatrick Sharpe)

A SLEE one, a slee one,
I neere saw sic a slee one;
The first night that I with him lay,
Oh, then he got this wee one.

This wee one, this wee one,
This bonny winking wee one;
I'de bin a maid amongst the rest
Wer't not I got this wee one.

THE NAMELESS MAIDEN

(C. 1800)

A MAID, I dare not tell her name;
For fear I should disgrace her,
Tempted a young man for to come
One night for to embrace her.
When at the door he made a stop, he made a stop,
Then she lay still, and snoring cry'd,
"The latch will up, the latch will up."

This young man, hearing of her words,
Pull'd up the latch and entered;
But in the room unfortunately
To her mother's bed he ventured.
When the poor maid was sore afraid,
And almost dead, and almost dead;
Then she lay still, and snoring cry'd,
"To the truckle bed, to the truckle bed."

Unto the truckle bed he went,
  But as this youth was a-going,
The unlucky cradle stood in his way,
  Which had almost spoil'd his wooing.
When after this the maid he spy'd, the maid he spy'd,
Here she lay still, and snoring cry'd,
"To th'other side, to th'other side."

Unto the other side he went,
  To show the love he meant her;
Pull'd off his clothes courageously,
  And fell to the work he was sent for.
When the poor maid made no reply, made no reply,
But she lay still, and snoring cry'd,
"A little too high, a little too high."

This lusty lover half ashamed,
  Of her gentle admonition,
He thought to charge her home again,
  As e'er a girl could wish him.
"Why now my love, I'm right I know, I'm right I know."
Then she lay still, and snoring cry'd,
"A little too low, a little too low."

But by mistake, at length this youth
  His business so well 'tended,
He hit the mark so cunningly,
  He defy'd all the world to mend it.
"Well now, my love, I'm right I swear, I'm right I swear."
Then she lay still, and snoring cry'd,
"Oh there! just there! Oh there! just there!"

FROM THE ODES OF ANACREON

(By Thomas Moore)

SABLED by the solar beam,
  Now the fiery clusters team,
In osier baskets, borne along
By all the vestal vintage throng
Of rosy youths and virgins fair,
Ripe as the melting fruits they bear
Now, now they press the pregnant grapes,
And now the captive stream escapes,
In fervid tide of nectar gushing,
And for its bondage proudly blushing!
While round the vat's impurpled brine,

The choral song, the vintage hymn
Of rosy youths and virgins fair.
Steals on the cloy'd and painting air.
Mark, how they drink, with all their eyes,
The orient tide sparkling flies;
The infant balm of all their fears,
The infant Bacchus, born in tears!
When he, whose verging years decline,
As deep into the vale as mine,
When he inhales the vintage-spring,
His heart is fire, his foot's a wing;
And as he flies, his hoary hair
Plays truant with the wanton air!
While the warm youth, whose wishing soul
Has kindled o'er the inspiring bowl,
Impassioned seeks the shadowy grove,
Where, in the tempting guise of love,
Reclining sleeps some witching maid,
Whose sunny charms but half displayed,
Blushed through the bower, that, closely twined,
Excludes the kisses of the wind!
The virgin wakes, the glowing boy
Allures her to the embrace of joy;
Swears that the herbage Heaven had spread
Was sacred as the nuptial bed;
That laws should never bind desire,
And love was nature's holiest fire!
The virgin weeps, the virgin sighs;
He kissed her lips, he kissed her eyes;
The sigh was balm, the tear was dew,
They only raised his flame anew.
And oh! he stole the sweetest flower
That ever bloomed in any bower!
Such is the madness wine imparts,
Whene'er it steals on youthful hearts.

DID NOT

(By Thomas Moore. From *Juvenile Poems*, 1801)

'TWAS a new feeling—something more
Than we had dared to own before,
Which then we hid not:
We saw it in each other's eye,
And wished, in every half-breathed sigh,
To speak, but did not.

She felt my lips' impassioned touch—
'Twas the first time I dare so much,
And yet she chid not;
But whispered o'er my burning brow,
"Oh, do you doubt I love you now,"
Sweet soul! I did not

Warmly I felt her bosom thrill,
I prest it closer, closer still,
Though gently bid not,
Till—oh! the world hath seldom heard
Of lovers, who so nearly erred,
And yet, who did not.

TO CAROLINE

(By Lord Byron. From *Hours of Idleness*, 1807)

1.

YOU say you love, and yet your eye
No symptom of that love conveys,
You say you love, yet know not why
Your cheek no sign of love betrays.

2.

Ah! did that breast with ardour glow,
With me alone it joy could know,
Or feel with me the listless woe,
Which racks my heart when far from thee.

3.

Whene'er we meet my blushes rise,
And mantle through my purpled cheek,
But yet no blush to mine replies,
Nor e'en your eyes your love bespeak.

4.

Your voice alone declares your flame,
And though so sweet it breathes my name,
Our passions still are not the same;
Alas! you cannot love like me.

5.

For e'en your lip seems steep'd in snow,
And though so oft it meets my kiss,
It burns with no responsive glow,
Nor melts like mine in dewy bliss.

6.

Ah! what are words to love like mine,
Though utter'd by a voice like thine,
I still in murmurs must repine,
And think that love can ne'er be true.

7.

Which meets me with no joyous sign,
Without a sigh which bids adieu;
How different is my love from thine,
How deep my grief when leaving you!

8.

Your image fills my anxious breast,
Till day declines adown the West,
And when at night, I sink to rest,
In dreams your fancied form I view.

9.

'Tis then your breast, no longer cold,
With equal ardour seems to burn,
While close your arms around me fold,
Your lips my kiss with warmth return.

10.

Ah! would these joyous moments last;
Vain HOPE! the gay delusion's past,
That voice!—ah! no, 'tis but the blast,
Which echoes through the neighbouring grove.

11.

But when awake, your lips I seek,
And clasp enraptur'd all your charms,
So chills the pressure of your cheek,
I fold a statue in my arms.

12.

If thus, when to my heart embrac'd,
No pleasure in your eyes is trac'd;
You may be prudent, fair, and chaste,
But ah! my girl, you do not love.

THE RAPE OF AURORA

(By George Meredith. 1851)

NEVER, O never,
  Since dewy sweet Flora
Was ravished by Zephyr,
  Was such a thing heard
    In the valleys so hollow!
  Till rosy Aurora,
Uprising as ever,
  Bright Phosphor to follow,
Pale Phoebe to sever,
  Was caught like a bird
    To the breast of Apollo!

Wildly she flutters,
  And flushes all over
With passionate mutters
  Of shame to the hush
    Of his amorous whispers:
  But O such a lover
Must win when he utters,
  Thro' rosy red lispers,
The pains that discover
  The wishes that gush
    From the torches of Hesperus.

One finger just touching
  The Orient chamber,
Unflooded the gushing
  Of light that illumed
    All her lustrous unveiling.
  On clouds of glow amber,
Her limbs richly blushing,
  She lay sweetly wailing,
In odours that gloomed
  On the God as he bloomed
    O'er her loveliness paling.

Great Pan in his covert
  Beheld the rare glistening,
The cry of the love-hurt,
  The sigh and the kiss
    Of the latest close mingling:
  But love, thought he, listening,
Will not do a dove hurt,
  I know,—and a tingling,
Latent with bliss,
  Prickt thro' him, I wis,
    For the Nymph he was singling.

LOVE-IN-IDLENESS

(By Thomas Lovell Beddoes. 1851)

I

"SHALL I be your first love, lady, shall I be your first?
Oh! then I'll fall before you, down on my velvet knee,
And deeply bend my rosy head and press it upon thee,
And swear that there is nothing more, for which my heart doth thirst.
But a downy kiss, and pink,
Between your lips' soft chink."

II

"Yes, you shall be my first love, boy, and you shall be my first,
And I will raise you up again unto my bosom's fold;
And when your kisses many one on lip and cheek have told,
I'll let you loose upon the grass, to leave me if you durst;
And so we'll toy away
The night besides the day."

III

"But let me be your second love, but let me be your second,
For then I'll tap so gently, dear, upon your window pane,
And creep between the curtains in, where never man has lain,
And never leave thy gentle side till the morning star hath beckoned,
Held in the silken lace
Of thy young arms' embrace."

IV

"Well thou shalt be my second love, yes, gentle boy, my second,
And I will wait at eve for thee all lonely in my bower.
And yield unto thy kisses, like a bud to April's shower.
From moonset till the tower-clock the hour of dawn hath reckoned,
And lock thee with my arms
All silent up in charms."

V

"No, I will be thy third love, lady, aye I will be the third,
And break upon thee, bathing, in woody place alone,
And catch thee to my saddle and ride o'er stream and stone,

And press thee well, and kiss thee well, and never speak a word,
'Till—thou has yielded up
The first taste of love's cup."

VI

"Then thou shalt not be my first love, boy, nor my second, nor my third;
If thou'rt the first, I'll laugh at thee and pierce thy flesh with thorns;
If the second, from my chamber pelt with jeering laugh and scorns;
And if thou darest be the third, I'll draw my dirk unheard
And cut thy heart in two,
And then die, weeping you."

FROM PENT-UP ACHING RIVERS

(By Walt Whitman. From *Leaves of Grass.* 1860)

FROM pent-up aching rivers,
From that of myself, without which I were nothing,
From what I am determin'd to make illustrious, even if I stand sole among men,
From my own voice resonant, singing the phallus,
Singing the song of procreation.
Singing the need of superb children and therein superb grown people,
Singing the muscular urge and the blending,
Singing the bedfellow's song, (O resistless yearning!
O for any and each, the body correlative attracting!
O for you, whoever you are, your correlative body! O it, more than all else, you delighting!)
From the hungry gnaw that eats me night and day,
From native moments, from bashful pains, singing them,
Seeking something yet unfound though I have diligently sought it many a long year,
Singing the true song of the soul fitful at random,
Singing what, to the Soul, entirely redeemed her, the faithful one even the prostitute, who detained me when I went to the city;
Singing the song of prostitutes;
Renascent with grossest Nature or among animals,
Of that, of them and what goes with them my poems informing,

Of the smell of apples and lemons, of the pairing of birds,
Of the wet of woods, of the lapping of waves,
Of the mad pushes of waves upon the land, I them chanting,
The overture lightly sounding, the strain anticipating,
The welcome nearness, the sight of the perfect body,
The swimmer swimming naked in the bath, or motionless on his back lying and floating,
The female form approaching, I pensive, love-flesh tremulous aching,
The divine list for myself, or you or for any one, making,
The face, the limbs, the index from head to foot, and what it arouses,
The mystic deliria, the madness amorous, the utter abandonment,
(Hark close and still what I now whisper to you,
I love you, O you entirely possess me,
O I wish that you and I escape from the rest and go utterly off, free and lawless,
Two hawks in the air, two fishes swimming in the sea, not more lawless than we;)
The furious storm through me careering, I passionately trembling,
The oath of inseparableness of two together, of the woman that loves me and whom I love more than my life, that oath swearing,
(O I willingly stake all for you,
O let me be lost if it must be so!
O you and I! what is it to us what the rest do or think?
What is all else to us? only that we enjoy each other and exhaust each other if it must be so;)
From the master, the pilot I yield the vessel to,
The general commanding me, commanding all, from him permission taking,
From time the programme hastening, (I have loiter'd too long as it is,)
From sex, from the warp and from the woof,
(To talk to the perfect girl who understands me, to waft to her these from my own lips—to effuse them from my own body;)
From privacy, from frequent repinings alone,
From plenty of persons near and yet the right person not near,
From the soft sliding of hands over me and thrusting of fingers through my hair and beard,
From the long sustain'd kiss upon the mouth or bosom,
From the close pressure that makes me or any man drunk, fainting with excess,

From what the divine husband knows, from the work of fatherhood,
From exultation, victory and relief, from the bedfellow's embrace in the night,
From the act-poems of eyes, hands, hips and bosoms,
From the cling of the trembling arm,
From the bending curve and the clinch,
From side by side the pliant coverlet off-throwing,
From the one so unwilling to have me leave, and me just as unwilling to leave,
(Yet a moment O tender waiter, and I return,)
From the hour of shining stars and dropping dews,
From the night a moment I emerging fitting out,
Celebrate you act divine—and you children prepared for,
And you, stalwart loins.

I SING THE BODY ELECTRIC

(By Walt Whitman. From *Leaves of Grass.* 1860)

I HAVE perceiv'd that to be with those I like is enough,
To stop in company with the rest at evening is enough,
To be surrounded by beautiful, curious, breathing, laughing flesh is enough,
To pass among them or touch any one, or rest my arm ever so lightly round his or her neck for a moment, what is this then?
I do not seek any more delight, I swim in it as in a sea.

There is something in staying close to men and women and looking on them, and in the contact and odor of them, that pleases the soul well,
All things please the soul, but these please the soul well.

This is the female form,
A divine nimbus exhales from it from head to foot,
It attracts with fierce undeniable attraction,
I am drawn by its breath as if I were no more than a helpless vapor, all falls aside but myself and it,
Books, art, religion, time, the visible and solid earth, and what was expected of heaven or fear'd of hell, are now consumed,
Mad filaments, ungovernable shoots play out of it, the response likewise ungovernable,
Hair, bosom, hips, bend of legs, negligent falling hands all diffused, mine too diffused,

Ebb stung by the flow and flow, stung by the ebb, love flesh swelling and deliciously aching,
Limitless limpid jets of love hot and enormous, quivering jelly of love, white blow and delirious juice,
Bridegroom night of love working surely and softly into the prostrate dawn;
Undulating into the willing and yielding day,
Lost in the cleave of the clasping and sweet-flesh'd day.
This the nucleus—after the child is born of woman, man is born of woman,
This is the bath of birth, this the merge of small and large, and the outlet again,

Be not ashamed women, your privilege encloses the rest, and is the exit of the rest,
You are the gates of the body, and you are the gates of the soul.
The female contains all qualities and tempers them,
She is in her place and moves with perfect balance,
She is all things duly veil'd, she is both passive and active,
She is to conceive daughters as well as sons, and sons as well as daughters.

As I see my soul reflected in Nature,
As I see through a mist, One with inexpressible completeness, sanity, beauty,
See the bent head and arms folded over the breast, the Female I see.

A WOMAN WAITS FOR ME

(By Walt Whitman. From *Leaves of Grass.* 1860)

A WOMAN waits for me, she contains all, nothing is lacking,
Yet all were lacking if sex were lacking, or if the moisture of the right man were lacking.

Sex contains all, bodies, souls,
Meanings, proofs, purities, delicacies, results, promulgations,
Songs, commands, health, pride, the maternal mystery, the seminal milk,
All hopes, benefactions, bestowals, all the passions, loves, beauties, delights of the earth,
These are contain'd in sex as parts of itself and justifications of itself.

Without shame the man I like knows and avows the deliciousness of his sex,
Without shame the woman I like knows and avows hers.

Now I will dismiss myself from impassive women,
I will go stay with her who waits for me, and with those women that are warm-blooded and sufficient for me,
I see that they understand me and do not deny me,
I see that they are worthy of me, I will be the robust husband of those women.

They are not one jot less than I am,
They are tann'd in the face by shining suns and blowing winds,
Their flesh has the old divine suppleness and strength,
They know how to swim, row, ride, wrestle, shoot, run, strike, retreat, advance, resist, defend themselves,
They are ultimate in their own right—they are calm, clear, well-possess'd of themselves.

I draw you close to me, you women,
I cannot let you go, I would do you good,
I am for you, and you are for me, not only for our own sake, but for others' sakes,
Envelop'd in you sleep greater heroes and bards,
They refuse to awake at the touch of any man but me.

It is I, you women, I make my way,
I am stern, acrid, large, undissuadable, but I love you,
I do not hurt you any more than is necessary for you,
I pour the stuff to start sons and daughters fit for these States, I press with slow rude muscle,
I brace myself effectually, I listen to no entreaties,
I dare not withdraw till I deposit what has so long accumulated within me.

Through you I drain the pent-up rivers of myself,
In you I wrap a thousand onward years,
On you I graft the grafts of the best-beloved of me and America,
The drops I distil upon you shall grow fierce and athletic girls, new artists, musicians, and singers,
The babes I beget upon you are to beget babes in their turn,
I shall demand perfect men and women out of my love-spendings,
I shall expect them to interpenetrate with others, as I and you interpenetrate now,
I shall count on the fruits of the gushing showers of them, as I count on the fruits of the gushing showers I give now,
I shall look for loving crops from the birth, life, death, immortality, I plant so lovingly now.

A BALLAD OF DEATH

(By Algernon Charles Swinburne. From *Poems and Ballads.* 1866)

KNEEL down, fair Love, and fill thyself with tears,
Girdle thyself with signing for a girth
Upon the sides of mirth,
Cover thy lips and eyelids, let thine ears
Be filled with rumour of people sorrowing;
Make thee soft raiment out of woven sighs
Upon the flesh to cleave,
Set pains therein and many a grievous thing,
And many sorrows after each his wise
For amlet and for gorget and for sleeve.

O Love's lute heard about the lands of death,
Left hanged upon the trees that were therein;
O Love and Time and Sin,
Three singing mouths that mourn now under breath,
Three lovers, each one evil spoken of;
O smitten lips where through this voice of mine
Came softer with her praise;
Abide a little for our lady's love.
The kisses of her mouth were more than wine,
And more than peace the passage of her days.

O Love, thou knowest if she were good to see.
O Time, thou shalt not find in any land
Till, cast out of thine hand,
The sunlight and the moonlight fail from thee,
Another woman fashioned like as this.
O Sin, thou knowest that all thy shame in her
Was made a goodly thing;
Yea, she caught Shame and shamed him with her kiss,
With her fair kiss, and lips much lovelier
Than lips of amorous roses in late spring.

By night there stood over against my bed
Queen Venus with a hood striped gold and black,
Both sides drawn fully back
From brows wherein the sad blood failed of red,
And temples drained of purple and full of death.
Her curled hair had the wave of sea-water
And the sea's gold in it.
Her eyes were as a dove's that sickeneth.
Strewn dust of gold she had shed over her,
And pearl and purple and amber on her feet.

Upon her raiment of dyed sendaline
Were painted all the secret ways of love
And covered things thereof,
That hold delight as grape-flowers held their wine;
Red mouths of maidens and red feet of doves,
And brides that kept within the bride-chamber
Their garment of soft shame,
And weeping faces of the wearied loves
That swoon in sleep and awake wearier,
With heat of lips and hair shed out like flame.

The tears that through her eyelids fell on me
Made mine own bitter where they ran between
As blood had fallen therein,
She saying; Arise, lift up thine eyes and see
If any glad thing be or any good
Now the best thing is taken forth of us;
Even she to whom all praise
Was as one flower in a great multitude,
One glorious flower of many and glorious,
One day found gracious among many days:

Even she whose handmaiden was Love—to whom
At kissing times across her stateliest bed
Kings bowed themselves and shed
Pale wine, and honey with the honeycomb,
And spikenard bruised for a burnt-offering;
Even she between whose lips the kiss became
As fire and frankincense;
Whose hair was as gold raiment on a king,
Whose eyes were as the morning purged with flame,
Whose eyelids as sweet savour issuing thence.

Then I beheld, and lo on the other side
My lady's likeness crowned and robed and dead.
Sweet still, but now not red,
Was the shut mouth whereby men lived and died.
And sweet, but emptied of the blood's blue shade,
The great curled eyelids that withheld her eyes.
And sweet, but like spoilt gold,
The weight of colour in her tresses weighed.
And sweet, but as a vesture with new dyes,
The body that was clothed with love of old.

Ah! that my tears filled all her woven hair
And all the hollow bosom of her gown—
Ah! that my tears ran down
Even to the place where many kisses were,
Even where her parted breast-flowers have place,

Even where they are cloven apart—who knows not this?
Ah! the flowers cleave apart
And their sweet fills the tender interspace;
Ah! the leaves grown thereof were things to kiss
Ere their fine gold was tarnished at the heart.

Ah! in the days when God did good to me,
Each part about her was a righteous thing;
Her mouth was an almsgiving,
The glory of her garments charity,
The beauty of her bosom a good deed,
In the good days when God kept sight of us;
Love lay upon her eyes,
And on that hair whereof the world takes heed;
And all her body was more virtuous
Than souls of women fashioned otherwise.

Now, ballad, gather poppies in thine hands
And sheaves of brier and many rusted sheaves
Rain-rotten in rank lands,
Waste marigold and late unhappy leaves
And grass that fades ere any of it be mown;
And when thy bosom is filled full thereof
Seek out Death's face ere the light altereth,
And say "My master that was thrall to Love
Is become thrall to Death."
Bow down before him, ballad, sigh and groan,
But make no sojourn in thy outgoing;
For haply it may be
That when thy feet return at evening
Death shall come in with thee.

LES NOYADES

(By Algernon Charles Swinburne. From *Poems and Ballads.* 1866)

WHATEVER a man of the sons of men
Shall say to his heart of the lords above,
They have shown man verily, once and again,
Marvellous mercies and infinite love.

In the wild fifth year of the change of things,
When France was glorious and blood-red, fair
With dust of battle and deaths of kings,
A queen of men, with helmeted hair;

Carrier came down to the Loire and slew,
  Till all the ways and the waves waxed red:
Bound and drowned, slaying two by two,
  Maidens and young men, naked and wed.

They brought on a day to his judgment-place
  One rough with labour and red with fight,
And a lady noble by name and face,
  Faultless, a maiden, wonderful, white.

She knew not, being for shame's sake blind,
  If his eyes were hot on her face hard by.
And the judge bade strip and ship them, and bind
  Bosom to bosom, to drown and die.

The white girl winced and whitened; but he
  Caught fire, waxed bright as a great bright flame
Seen with a thunder far out on the sea,
  Laughed hard as the glad blood went and came.

Twice his lips quailed with delight, then said,
  "I have but a word to you all, one word
Bear with me; surely I am but dead";
  And all they laughed and mocked him and heard.

"Judge, when they open the judgment-roll,
  I will stand upright before God and pray:
"Lord God, have mercy on one man's soul,
  For his mercy was great upon earth, I say.

"Lord, if I loved thee—Lord, if I served—
  If these who darkened thy fair Son's face
I fought with, sparing not one, nor swerved
  A hand's breadth, Lord, in the perilous place—

"I pray thee say to this man, O Lord,
  Sit thou for him at my feet on a throne.
I will face thy wrath, though it bite as a sword,
  And my soul shall burn for his soul, and stone.

"For Lord, thou knowest, O God most wise,
  How gracious on earth were his deeds toward me.
Shall this be a small thing in thine eyes,
  That is greater in mine than the whole great sea?"

I have loved this woman my whole life long,
  And even for love's sake when have I said
"I love you"? when have I done you wrong,
  Living? but now I shall have you dead.

"Yea, now, do I bid you love me, love?
  Love me or loathe, we are one not twain.
But God be praised in his heaven above
  For this my pleasure and that my pain!

"For never a man, being mean like me,
  Shall die like me till the whole world dies.
I shall drown with her, laughing for love; and she
  Mix with me, touching me, lips and eyes.

"Shall she not know me and see me all through,
  Me, on whose heart as a worm she trod?
You have given me, God requite it you,
  What man yet never was given of God."

O sweet one love, O my life's delight,
  Dear, though the days have divided us,
Lost beyond hope, taken far out of sight,
  Not twice in the world shall the gods do thus.

Had it been so hard for my love? but I,
  Though the gods gave all that a god can give,
I had chosen rather the gift to die,
  Cease, and be glad above all that live.

For the Loire would have driven us down to the sea,
  And the sea would have pitched us from shoal to shoal;
And I should have held you, and you held me,
  As flesh holds flesh, and the soul the soul.

Could I change you, help you to love me, sweet,
  Could I give you the love that would sweeten death,
We should yield, go down, locked hands and feet,
  Die, drown together, and breath catch breath;

But you would have felt my soul in a kiss,
  And known that once if I loved you well;
And I would have given my soul for this
  To burn for ever in burning hell.

HERMAPHRODITUS

(By Algernon Charles Swinburne. From *Poems and Ballads.* 1866)

I.

LIFT up thy lips, turn round, look back for love,
  Blind love that comes by night and casts out rest
Of all things tired thy lips look weariest,
Save the long smile that they are wearied of.

Ah sweet, albeit no love be sweet enough,
  Choose of two loves and cleave unto the best;
  Two loves at either blossom of thy breast
Strive until one be under and one above.
Their breath is fire upon the amorous air,
Fire in thine eyes and where thy lips suspire:
And whosoever hath seen thee, being so fair,
  Two things turn all his life and blood to fire;
A strong desire begot on great despair,
  A great despair cast out by strong desire.

II.

Where between sleep and life some brief space is,
  With love like gold bound round about the head,
  Sex to sweet sex with lips and limbs is wed,
Turning the fruitful feud of hers and his
To the waste wedlock of a sterile kiss;
  Yet from them something like as fire is shed
  That shall not be assuaged till death be dead,
Though neither life nor sleep can find out this.
Love made himself of flesh that perisheth
  A pleasure-house for all the loves his kin;
But on the one side sat a man like death,
  And on the other a woman sat like sin.
So with veiled eyes and sobs between his breath
  Love turned himself and would not enter in.

III.

Love, is it love or sleep or shadow or light
  That lies between thine eyelids and thine eyes?
  Like a flower laid upon a flower it lies,
Or like the night's dew laid upon the night.
Love stands upon thy left hand and thy right,
  Yet by no sunset and by no moonrise
  Shall make thee man and ease a woman's sighs,
Or make thee woman for a man's delight.
To what strange end hath some strange god made fair
  The double blossom of two fruitless flowers?
Hid love in all the folds of all thy hair,
  Fed thee on summers, watered thee with showers,
Given all the gold that all the seasons wear
  To thee that art a thing of barren hours?

IV.

Yea, love, I see; it is not love but fear.
  Nay, sweet, it is not fear but love, I know;
  Or wherefore should thy body's blossom blow

So sweetly, or thine eyelids leave so clear
Thy gracious eyes that never made a tear—
  Though for their love our tears like blood should flow,
  Though love and life and death should come and go,
So dreadful, so desirable, so dear?
Yea, sweet, I know; I saw in what swift wise
  Beneath the woman's and the water's kiss
  Thy moist limbs melted into Salmacis,
And the large light turned tender in thine eyes,
And all thy boy's breath softened into sighs;
  But Love being blind, how should he know of this?

FRAGOLETTA

(By Algernon Charles Swinburne. From *Poems and Ballads.* 1866)

O LOVE! what shall be said of thee?
  The son of grief begot by joy?
Being sightless, wilt thou see?
Being sexless, wilt thou be
Maiden or boy?

I dreamed of strange lips yesterday
And cheeks wherein the ambiguous blood
Was like a rose's—yea,
A rose's when it lay
Within the bud.

What fields have bred thee, or what groves
Concealed thee, O mysterious flower,
O double rose of Love's,
With leaves that lure the doves
From bud to bower?

I dare not kiss it, lest my lip
Press harder than an indrawn breath,
And all the sweet life slip
Forth, and the sweet leaves drip,
Bloodlike, in death.

O sole desire of my delight!
O sole delight of my desire!
Mine eyelids and eyesight
Feed on thee day and night
Like lips of fire.

Lean back thy throat of carven pearl,
Lest thy mouth murmur like the dove's;
Say, Venus hath no girl,
No front of female curl,
Among her Loves.

Thy sweet low bosom, thy close hair,
Thy strait soft flanks and slenderer feet,
Thy virginal strange air,
Are these not over fair
For Love to greet?

How should he greet thee? what new name,
Fit to move all men's hearts, could move
Thee, deaf to love or shame,
Love's sister, by the same
Mother as Love?

Ah sweet, the maiden's mouth is cold,
Her breast-blossoms are simply red,
Her hair mere brown or gold,
Fold over simple fold
Binding her head.

Thy mouth is made of fire and wine,
Thy barren bosom takes my kiss
And turns my soul to thine
And turns thy lip to mine,
And mine it is.

Thou hast a serpent in thine hair,
In all the curls that close and cling;
And ah, thy mouth too fair
To kiss and sting!

Cleave to me, love me, kiss mine eyes,
Satiate thy lips with loving me;
Nay, for thou shalt not rise;
Lie still as Love that dies
For love of thee.

Mine arms are close about thine head,
My lips are fervent on thy face,
And where my kiss hath fed
Thy flower-like blood leaps red
To the kissed place.

O bitterness of things too sweet
O broken singing of the dove!
Love's wings are over fleet,
And like the panther's feet
The feet of Love.

IN THE ORCHARD

(By Algernon Charles Swinburne. From *Poems and Ballads.* 1866)

LEAVE go my hands, let me catch breath and see;
Let the dew-fall drench either side of me;
Clear apple-leaves are soft upon that moon
Seen sidelong like a blossom in the tree;
Ah God, ah God, that day should be so soon.

The grass is thick and cool, it lets us lie.
Kissed upon either cheek and either eye,
I turn to thee as some green afternoon
Turns toward sunset, and is loth to die;
Ah God, ah God, that day should be so soon.

Lie closer, lean your face upon my side,
Feel where the dew fell that has hardly dried,
Hear how the blood beats that went nigh to swoon;
The pleasure lives there when the sense has died;
Ah God, ah God, that day should be so soon.

O my fair lord, I charge you leave me this:
Is it not sweeter than a foolish kiss?
Nay take it then, my flower, my first in June,
My rose, so like a tender mouth it is:
Ah God, ah God, that day should be so soon.

Love, till dawn sunder night from day with fire,
Dividing my delight and my desire,
The crescent life and love the plenilune,
Love me though dusk begin and dark retire;
Ah God, ah God, that day should be so soon.

Ah, my heart fails, my blood draws back; I know,
When life runs over, life is near to go;
And with the slain of love love's ways are strewn,
And with their blood, if love will have it so;
Ah God, ah God, that day should be so soon.

Ah, do thy will now; slay me if thou wilt;
There is no building now the walls are built,
No quarrying now the corner-stone is hewn,
No drinking now the vine's whole blood is spilt;
Ah God, ah God, that day should be so soon.

Nay, slay me now; nay, for I will be slain;
Pluck thy red pleasure from the teeth of pain,
Break down thy vine ere yet grape-gatherers prune,
Slay me ere day can slay desire again;
Ah God, ah God, that day should be so soon.

Yea, with thy sweet lips, with thy sweet sword; yea
Take life and all, for I will die, I say;
  Love, I gave love, is life a better boon?
For sweet night's sake I will not live till day;
  Ah God, ah God, that day should be so soon.

Nay, I will sleep then only; nay, but go.
Ah sweet, too sweet to me, my sweet, I know
  Love, sleep, and death go to the sweet same tune;
Hold my hair fast, and kiss me through it so.
  Ah God, ah God, that day should be so soon.

EROTION

(By Algernon Charles Swinburne. From *Poems and Ballads.* 1866)

SWEET for a little even to fear, and sweet,
  O love, to lay down fear at love's fair feet;
Shall not some fiery memory of his breath
Lie sweet on lips that touch the lips of death?
Yet leave me not; yet, if thou wilt, be free;
Love me no more, but love my love of thee.
Love where thou wilt, and live thy life; and I,
One thing I can, and one love cannot—die.
Pass from me; yet thine arms, thine eyes, thine hair,
Feed my desire and deaden my despair.
Yet once more ere time change us, ere my cheek
Whiten, ere hope be dumb or sorrow speak,
Yet once more ere thou hate me, one full kiss;
Keep other hours for others, save me this.
Yea, and I will not (if it please thee) weep,
Lest thou be sad; I will but sigh, and sleep.
Sweet, does death hurt? thou canst not do me wrong:
I shall not lack thee, as I loved thee, long.
Hast thou not given me above all that I live
Joy, and a little sorrow shalt not give?
What even though fairer fingers of strange girls
Pass nestling through thy beautiful boy's curls
As mine did, or those curled lithe lips of thine
Meet theirs as these, all theirs come after mine;
And though I were not, though I be not, best,
I have loved and love thee more than all the rest.
O love, O lover, loose or hold me fast,
I had thee first, whoever have thee last;

Fairer or not, what need I know, what care?
To thy fair bud my blossom once seemed fair.
Why am I fair at all before thee, why
At all desired? seeing thou art fair, not I.
I shall be glad of thee, O fairest head,
Alive, alone, without thee, with thee, dead;
I shall remember while the light lives yet,
And in the night-time I shall not forget.
Though (as thou wilt) thou leave me ere life leave,
I will not, for thy love I will not, grieve;
Not as they use who love not more than I,
Who love not as I love thee though I die;
And though thy lips, once mine, be oftener prest
To many another brow and balmier breast,
And sweeter arms, or sweeter to thy mind,
Lull thee or lure, more fond thou wilt not find.

BEFORE DAWN

(By Algernon Charles Swinburne. From *Poems and Ballads.* 1866)

SWEET life, if life were stronger,
Earth clear of years that wrong her,
Then two things might live longer,
Two sweeter things than they;
Delight, the rootless flower,
And love, the bloomless bower;
Delight that lives an hour,
And love that lives a day.

From evensong to daytime,
When April melts in Maytime,
Love lengthens out his playtime,
Love lessens breath by breath,
And kiss by kiss grows older
On listless throat or shoulder
Turned sideways now, turned colder
Than life that dreams of death.

This one thing once worth giving
Life gave, and seemed worth living;
Sin sweet beyond forgiving
And brief beyond regret:
To laugh and love together
And weave with foam and feather
And wind and words the tether
Our memories play with yet.

Ah, one thing worth beginning,
One thread in life worth spinning,
Ah sweet, one sin worth sinning
  With all the whole soul's will;
To lull you till one stilled you,
To kiss you till one killed you,
To feed you till one filled you,
  Sweet lips, if love could fill;

To hunt sweet Love and lose him
Between white arms and bosom,
Between the bud and blossom,
  Between your throat and chin;
To say of shame—what is it?
Or virtue—we can miss it,
Of sin—we can but kiss it,
  And it's no longer sin:

To feel the strong soul, stricken
Through fleshly pulses, quicken
Beneath swift sighs that thicken,
  Soft hands and lips that smite;
Lips that no love can tire,
With hands that sting like fire,
Weaving the web Desire
  To snare the bird Delight.

But love so lightly plighted,
Our love with torch unlighted,
Paused near us unaffrighted,
  Who found and left him free;
None, seeing us cloven in sunder,
Will weep or laugh or wonder;
Light love stands clear of thunder,
  And safe from winds at sea.

As, when late larks give warning
Of dying lights and dawning,
Night murmurs to the morning,
  "Lie still, O love, lie still";
And half her dark limbs cover
The white limbs of her lover,
With amorous plumes that hover
  And fervent lips that chill;

As scornful day represses
Night's void and vain caresses,
And from her cloudier tresses
  Unwinds the gold of his,

With limbs from limbs dividing
And breath by breath subsiding;
For love has no abiding,
  But dies before the kiss;

So hath it been, so be it;
For who shall live and flee it?
But look that no man see it
  Or hear it unaware;
Lest all who love and choose him
See Love, and so refuse him;
For all who find him lose him,
  But all have found him fair.

KING DAVID

(By Algernon Charles Swinburne. From *Poems and Ballads.* 1866)

LORD GOD, alas, what shall I sain?
  Lo, thou art as an hundred men
Both to break and build again:
The wild ways thou makes plain,
Thine hands hold the hail and rain,
And thy fingers both grape and grain;
Of their largess we be all well fain,
  And of their great pity:
The sun thou madest of good gold,
Of clean silver the moon cold,
All the great stars thou hast told
As thy cattle in thy fold
Every one by his name of old;
Wind and water thou hast in hold,
  Both the land and the long sea;
Both the green sea and the land
Lord God, thou hast in hand,
Both white water and grey sand;
Upon thy right or thy left hand
There is no man that may stand;
  Lord, thou rue on me.
O wise Lord, if thou be keen
To note things amiss that been,
I am not worth a shell of bean
More than an old mare meagre and lean
For all my wrong-doing with my queen,
It grew not of our heartès clean,

But it began of her body.
For it fell in the hot May
I stood within a paven way
Built of fair bright stone, perfay,
That is as fire of night and day
And lighteth all my house.
Therein be neither stones nor sticks,
Neither red nor white bricks,
But for cubits five or six
There is most goodly sardonyx
And amber laid in rows.
It goes round about my roofs,
(If ye list ye shall have proofs)
There is good space for horse and hoofs,
Plain and nothing perilous.
For the fair green weather's heat,
And for the smell of leaves sweet,
It is no marvel, will ye weet,
A man to waxen amorous.
This I say now by my case
That spied forth of that royal place;
There I saw in no great space
Mine own sweet, both body and face,
Under the fresh boughs.
In a water that was there
She wesshe her goodly body bare
And dried it with her own hair;
Both her arms and her knees fair,
Both bosom and brows;
Both shoulders and eke thighs
Tho she wesshe upon this wise;
Ever she sighed with little sighs,
And ever she gave God thank.
Yea, God wot I can well see yet
Both her breast and her sides all wet
And her long hair withouten let
Spread sideways like a drawing net;
Full dear bought and full far fet
Was that sweet thing there y-set;
It were a hard thing to forget
How both lips and eyen met,
Breast and breath sank.
So goodly a sight as there she was,
Lying looking on her glass
By wan water in green grass,
Yet saw never man.

So soft and great she was and bright
With all her body waxen white,
I woxe nigh blind to see the light
Shed out of it to left and right;
This bitter sin from that sweet sight
Between us twain began.

LOVE AND SLEEP

(By Algernon Charles Swinburne. From *Poems and Ballads.* 1866)

LYING asleep between the strokes of night
I saw my love lean over my sad bed,
Pale as the duskiest lily's leaf or head,
Smooth-skinned and dark, with bare throat made to bite,
Too wan for blushing and too warm for white,
But perfect-coloured without white or red.
And her lips opened amorously, and said—
I wist not what, saving one word—Delight.
And all her face was honey to my mouth,
And all her body pasture to mine eyes;
The long lithe arms and hotter hands than fire,
The quivering flanks, hair smelling of the south,
The bright light feet, the splendid supple thighs
And glittering eyelids of my soul's desire.

THE DISTRESSED MAID

(Anonymous. Date unknown)

AS I walked out one May morning,
Down by a river side,
I overheard a couple discoursing,
Which filled my heart with pride.

May the heavens bless you, fair maid,
Sing me another song,
I wish you were my bride, he said.
Kind sir, I am too young.

The younger that you are, my love,
The better you are for me,
For I vow and do declare,
I'll wed no woman but thee.

He took me by the lily white hand
  He kissed both cheek and chin,
Then he took her to his marriage room,
  To sit awhile with him.

It was in the beginning of that night,
  They had both sport and play,
And all the latter part of that night
  Close in her arms did lay.

The night being gone and the day coming on
  The morning shone so clear,
This young man rose, put on his clothes,
  Saying, fare you well my dear.

Is that the promise you made to me,
  Down by the river side,
You promised to marry me,
  And make me your lawful bride.

If I promised to marry you,
  It's more than I will do,
I never will wed with any one,
  So easy found as you.

Go home to your father's garden,
  Sit down and cry your fill,
And when you think on what you've done,
  You may blame your own good will.

There is an herb in your father's garden,
  And some do call it rue,
When fishes fly, and swallows dive,
  Young men they will prove true.

I wish I was a maid again,
  As I was this time last night,
I would not change my portion
  For either lord or knight.

There are other farmer's daughters,
  To market they do go,
But I poor girl must stay at home,
  To rock the cradle, oh.

To rock the cradle, o'er and o'er,
  And sing the lullaby,
Was there e'er a maid in all this town.
  So crossed in love as I.

THE BUNCH OF RUSHES

(Anonymous. Date unknown)

IT was on a summer's morning,
As I walked forth to take the air,
Down by a shady arbour,
Where seldom strangers do appear
I espied a comely fair maid,
Who I thought was going astray,
With a bunch of rushes in her hand,
Which she had pulled on the way.

I cast my eyes around me,
To see if the coast was clear or no;
And seeing no one near me,
Straight way to her I then did go,
Says I, my loving fair one,
What are you doing here alone?
I came to pull green rushes,
But now I'm going home.

I clasp'd my arms around her,
And embraced her most tenderly,
She modestly rebuk'd me, saying,
Kind sir, you make too free;
Do you mean to undo me,
Because I look both poor and low,
I beg you for to excuse me,
Pray, loose me, sir, and let me go.

I says, my lovely charmer,
To you I mean no injury;
But come and sit beside me,
Beneath yon wide and shady tree,
Where the lofty lark and linnet,
Shall witness our mutual love,
And I shall never deceive you,
By all the powers above.

She then modestly consented,
And on the grass we both sat down,
And for fear of any moisture,
Beneath she spread her new silk gown
She says, young man, be easy,
Her cheeks were red with blushes, O
I beg you will not tease me,
Don't touch my bunch of rushes, O.

But now, sir, you are going,
  Pray, when shall we meet again,
I answered in a few words,
  When the clerk shall say, amen.
So make yourself quite easy,
  And merry be while I'm away,
And bless the happy hour,
  You came to pull green rushes, O.

TO.....

(By Francis Saltus. From *Honey and Gall.* 1873)

SLEEP and dream, lissome maid, while in rapture
  I caress thy grand poem of flesh:
While I toy with each rich purple mesh
Or gnarled tresses: when striving to capture
  All the hot biting odors from lips—
  Half apart with the sweetness that slips
From thy dimpled white smilings, sleep-fresh.

'Tis the perfect round curve of thy shoulder,
  And thy sleek supple flanks I admire,
  For thy moonish-white skin doth inspire
My hot, vexed, restless gaze to pierce bolder;
  For thou sleepest, and red is thy dream
  With the Naphla of lust, and its gleam
From the snows of thy breast hurls its fire.

Nay, awake not, nor turn, till I press thee,
  For thy sleep is consoling as night.
  And thy calm dreams shall taste the fire-night
Of love's blendings, as mad, I caress thee,
  And thy white form with red kisses mark—
  Till thine eyes wake from lethargies dark—
To the glamours and splendors of light.

Then from dream-bliss to life-bliss arisen,
  Thine hot tears, my hot tears will dispute,
  Then thy low pant sounds softer than lute
To my ear; and thy bare arms imprison—
  A no longer wild phantom of sighs,
  For thou closest thy large blurred eyes,
And liest wond'ring, nude, pallid, and mute!

Let my kisses then follow incessant,
O'er thy lips, o'er thy soft cheek of fur:
Let them moisten, as sultry they err
The black shade of thy silk brows crescent—
While I breathe the mysterious air,
From thy chaos of undulate hair,
Vague and dreamy as memories of myrrh.

PUELLA EROTICA

(By Francis Saltus. From *Shadows and Ideals.* 1890)

SHE stands most insolent in her gems and gold,
Haughtily cold;
Draining the cool Falernian's amber foam:
Her palace is the world and she its queen
Entrancing the obscene
Libidinous patricians of old Rome.

The drunken nobles, gorged with regal feasts,
Crouch like tame beasts
Before her sandaled feet, and deck with flowers
The glowing Paros of her perfect breast,
Pledging with feverish zest
Her stately beauty through the riotous hours.

Effeminate Caesars, with a Satyr leer,
Sigh to her ear
Their brutal whine and maddening desires;
No gleam of pleasure lingers in her glance
Fixed on the wanton dance,
Timed by the torment of a hundred lyres.

The boisterous laugh of Rome degenerate
And passionate
Breaks thro' the golden hall, but no rare smile
The indolent coral of her lip illumes;
She breathes the heady fumes,
And, statuesque, stands placid in her guile.

Nude slaves drag hampers of rich food and spice,
Perfumes and ice,
Unto the reeking, gold-crushed board in haste,
With monster lampreys from Pompeii caught fresh,
Fed upon human flesh,
To tempt her morbid delicacy of taste.

The Roman youths have vainly striven for weeks
Unto her cheeks
To bring the rose; and to her lips the strain
Of joyous song, but all their wealth and power,
Lavished within an hour,
Move not her proud, indifferent disdain.

They do not know how the proud beauty burns
With love, and yearns
For one fair, golden-headed galley slave,
Doomed by the Emperor on the coming day
To be the tiger's prey,
And whom by prayer or plea she cannot save!

WOMEN

(By Francis Saltus. From *Shadows and Ideals.* 1890)

WERE I a woman, I would not pray to be
The great Semiramis or Joan of Arc,
The Fair Sorel or Catherine grim and dark,
Or Cleopatra, supple as the sea.

Nor would it in sweet manner pleasure me
To be fond Juliet listening to the lark,
Nor yet a Staël, with genius for a mark,
Nay, nor pale Mary Stuart, queen and free.

Had I of such rare transformation choice,
I would be Messalina, warm and lewd,
Or amorous Sappho, with wild whims unpure,
Yea! any my lawless spirit would rejoice
To live in white Dubarry's bosom nude,
Or on the glittering breast of Pompadour!

A COURTESAN'S WHIM

(By Francis Saltus. From *Dreams After Sunset.* 1891)

TO calm desires that in my soul increase,
Delicious boys with poems of blond hair,
Supple dusk-eyed, whose eager kisses rare
Are sweet as dew, no longer bring me peace.

I tire of effeminate charm of Greece,
These Apollonian men with broad breasts bare,
Superbly statuesque, supremely fair;—
A God himself would tempt not my desire.

But in vague ways I most insanely yearn
To meet some lean, dwarfed, fetid, hairy thing
With loathsome skin and bulging eyes of rheum,
Then with wild sighs to make the monster burn
With Love's delight and bid his hot arms cling
Around my beauty in the perfumed gloom.

THE AWAKENING

(By Francis Saltus. From *Dreams After Sunset*)

HER arms lie bare about his neck, and still
In dream, her lips half open with a sigh
As though to woo her dream some sweet reply.
All slowly her enthralled senses fill.

As valley waters from a mountain rill
Swollen by storm. Her bosom'd treasures lie
Encircled by his arms, and still sweep by
The swelling tide into the Deep's deep will.

And he, too, dreams, in Love's night-hidden day—
Until the shallows, murmuring, rise and leap,
And lap the spirit within that sweet clay
Against his breast. Then lips that trysting keep,
Unconsciously, nearer and closer lay
Till sudden kisses burst the bonds of sleep.

IN SODOM

(By Francis Saltus. From *Lot's Wife*. 1890)

HERE rose the reeking altar-grees of Bel,
And Yem, the king of the exalted Gods,
And Bar, the hero of all heroes, stood
In lustrous bronze beside all potent Nin,
With Bita, king of oceans and of fish,
And Anu, holier than the holy stars.

Here reigned the great terror-dealing Beltis,
The pure, impeccable and beateous goddess,
And in the perfumed temples before her

Maidens would swoon in holy prostitution,
Adoring her fecundity and beauty,
Filling the temple with their sighs of rapture,
Low and delicious like the dove's soft cooing.
Here would they wait to lure the idle passer,
Tempting his glance by bare and fragrant bosoms,
Calling upon their goddess and Sheruba,
Divine Ishtar, and lily limbed Anuta,
To make their flesh a love-light and a wonder,
To win the timorous stranger and the passer
Their languid limbs were radiant with jewels;
Their thighs were smeared with warm, voluptuous ointments,
And tiars of gold coin amid their tresses
Shone in the gloom like the fond eyes of angels.
They smiled and languished in their lustful dreaming,
Watching their eyes flash in their copper mirrors,
Beautiful, redolent, supple-limbed and tempting,
Carelessly tapping on their noisy tabrets,
Screened by the goddess in the temple's arches,
Yearning for some sweet stripling of the city
Or the grave, palm-oiled warriors of Gomorrah,
And, as they toyed with gold and silver ouches,
Prayed unto Hea to relieve and send them
Some dainty zonah, some delicious zonah,
Who, lacking lovers, would with joy caress them,
Ay love them sweetlier for lacking lovers.

Within Ashur's colossal almug temple,
Around the holy altar sacrificial,
Drowsy with cassia fumes and stringent spices,
The heady nekoth, the sweet smell of heaven,
Lying and dozing with the sacred serpents,
Listening to eunuchs idly thrum the viol,
Nodding their chins upon their tuneless nebels,
Linger the chosen lovers of the altar.
Perfumed and supple, in a gaudy raiment,
Oiled to the beard and like fresh lilies fragrant,
Drenched with balsam and cinnamon's sweet juices,
Praying to Anu to secure them lovers;
Lovers who would reward their warm caresses
With costly gifts of onycha and ointment;
Lovers who lavish galbanum in plenty,
When cloyed and satisfied with their embracing,
And they to all will amorously pander,
Being of love's mysterious and strange passions
The slaves, the chosen and the perfect masters.

SONG OF THE GAY ZONAH

(By Francis Saltus. From *Lot's Wife*)

OH, sweet passer! I am fair,
For the lily scents my hair,
Made most redolent and glossy by the radiant roses' oil:
My ringed arms are dazzling white,
And my kiss is a delight,
While the sweet alhenna clusters burn my bosom while I toil.

Like my Goddess, great Ishtar,
My black glance outshines a star,
And my form is warm and wavy, like the palm and the tamar;
I have sapphires and rare gems
On my mantle's sacred hems,
And the ungents on my haunches come o'er deserts from afar.

I hold hidden in my tent,
Drugs of love and ravishment,
And a bed where fragrant lilies lie with birdling's downy plumes;
I hold passion and desire
To inspire love's sleepy fire,
And to stir the sudden pulses in soft aromatic glooms!

Till the midnight I will sing
Unto Nebo, the great king,
And my asor's gentle music will allay thy fevered rest;
Thou shalt slumber till my birds
Wake to hear my loving words,
While I press a thrice-born passion on the marble of my breast.

The pure night is waning fast;
Oh, my God Yem, unsurpassed!
Send me golden lovers many, ay, if only for a span!
And, oh passers wise and brave!
Be not tempted by yon slave,
For my kisses are far sweeter than the kisses of a man!

SONG OF THE PRIEST OF BEL

(By Francis Saltus. From *Lot's Wife*)

COME to me, all ye who burn
For a passion in return!
There are perfumes on my body and fresh leaves upon my hair;
I am sleek and very wise,
I know woman's softest sighs,
And my kisses, warm and manly, all the senses can ensnare.

I am old, ay, very old,
And my price is bricks of gold,
Being chief and holy master of the lovers of the town.
I am high priest unto Bel,
In the Grace of Vul I dwell,
And the motion of my pleasure is a song and a renown.

I have been the pampered slave
Of King Amraphel, the grave,
I have swooned and slumbered often in King Chedorlaomer's arms;
There is gold within my house,
There are jewels on my brows,
And my breast is warm and tender as an Arkite maiden's charms!

I have drugs to warm afresh
The dull failings of the flesh,
I have grateful food and spices, and suave basams honey-pure,
And when laggard from excess
Of my amorous caress,
I will sing thee Nergal's praises on the many-stringed kinoor.

See! the dawn is coming soon;
There's slumber in the moon;
Hasten, passer! hasten, stranger! to my tent's enticing shade.
Be not tempted by the cry
Of the zonahs strutting by,
For my kisses are far sweeter than the kisses of a maid.

SONG OF THE YOUTH

(By Francis Saltus. From *Lot's Wife*)

OH, sweet passer! I am strong.
Grace and charm to me belong;
All my flesh is like soft saummet and my muscles rival steel;
I have spices on my breast;
My dark locks are oiled and tressed,
And the wounds of suffering passion I can mollify and heal.

Hark, all ye who round me throng,
I can sing a lulling song,
I can charm you with the cadence of my rich sonorous voice,
And with suave, melodious words,
Sweeter far than trills of birds,
I can win your languid pleasure and can make the soul rejoice!

To our king one festal night
I gave rapture and delight,
And he crowned my brows with myrtle, ay! and kissed me on his throne;
For my beauty is as rare
As Askar's, surnamed the Fair,
And the secrets of sweet passion unto me belong alone!

There is ever new surprise
In the poem of my eyes;
I am lithe, and light, and supple, like the leopard of the plain;
My curled hair has reached the length
Of the lion's in his strength,
And my kiss is warm and fragrant like the falling of the rain!

I have zonahs in my house,
With white lilies on their brows,
To excite you by soft kisses and white perfume-reeking arms,
While I beckon your embrace
In the splendor of my grace,
While you play in joy ecstatic with the beauty of their charms!

Oh, sweet passer! do not heed
Yon old creature in his need,
For his words are false and worthless, and a century dims his fire;
He gives herbs and venomed roots;
His cold kiss is like a brute's,
And the spasm of God-like passion in his decrepit carcass tire!

Come to me, all ye who crave
The sweet passion of a slave!
Bring me gold, or wine and honey, and my kisses will be yours;
And I swear by mighty Bel
To anoint and please you well,
While my naked zonahs press you, and the balmy night endures!

THE WIFE OF LOT

(By Francis Saltus. From *Lot's Wife*)

NOW Lot, the son of Haran, dwelt within
The city's walls and loved its many ways;
But he was pure of heart unto his praise,
And much deplored all God-defying sin.

He lived estranged from the licentious throng,
  Doting upon the fairness of his wife,
  Proud of the blameless quiet of his life,
A righteous man and unashamed of song.

* * * * * * *

Now Ilcah, Lot's fair wife, in Sodom born,
  Was in her sullied heart adverse to him;
  Because his eyes by labour had grown dim,
She suffered by his love in silent scorn.

For he was like old dreamers in the night,
  Loving to doze and ponder on his herds,
  And even his infrequent passion words
Were tame unto her, offering no delight.

She, in the blooming May-time of her years,
  With passionate eyes and lustrous veils of hair,
  Yearned for love's ecstasy and its despair,
A love of laughter, ravishment and tears.

And she, grown weary of Lot's grave renown,
  Would seek the city's heart on festal days,
  And strut like zonahs on its marble ways,
For she adored a man within the town.

One whom her girlish spirit idolized,
  A valorous chief, a most athletic man,
  With mighty limbs, known as the lord Suran,
Who for his famed virility was prized.

And he had led her to Vul's temple, where,
  Ravished by his bright armor and the glance
  Of conquering eyes in a voluptuous trance
She veiled his breast with all her loosened hair.

And while the priests officiating cried:
  "Give to great Vul, oh women! all your charms!"
  She lay amort for love within his arms,
And on his perfumed bosom softly sighed.

And he, for she was ravenous to learn,
  Taught her the mysteries and the holy rites
  That steeped her bosom in unknown delights,
Strange pleasures, and new minglements that burn!

And she revered the aroma of his beard,
  Giving her radiant body for his play,
  And in the temple in the hot midday,
Alone, to tempt his vigor she appeared.

Veiled to the eyes, but amorous of the spot,
  Loving the sensual magic of the gloom,
  Seeking sweet impious bonds that foster doom,
Her heart made merry by her scorn of Lot.

Her limbs were maddened by strong Suran's touch;
  She sang to him in passionate unrest;
  His curled head was warm upon her breast;
His flanks were fruitful, and she loved him much.

Ay, with such adoration that, to fill
  His lecherous eyes with raptures held so, dear,
  She would have braved cold death without a fear,
If, following, Suran would have loved her still!

To please his whim at the great Autumn feast,
  Held to Vul's glory on the dying year,
  Rosy and nude, fair Ilcah did appear,
Surrendering her beauty to the priest.

Ay, in the holy vaults, for Suran's sake,
  She learned the arcana of the zonahs there,
  Slumbering with women amorous and bare,
So that he, too, in pleasure might partake.

And she in beauty through the temple trod,
  Warm with her loves and flushed by flowers and wine,
  Hailing her prostitution as divine
And most delightful, worthy of her God.

And Lot had honored her with manly trust,
  And let the days pass dreaming of his herds,
  Counting his kine and listening to his birds,
Serenely unsuspicious and most just.

* * * * * * *

THE TRIUMPH OF THE FLESH

(By George Moore. From *Pagan Poems.* 1881)

WE have passed from the regions of dreams and of vision
  And the flesh is the flesh and the rose is the rose;
And we see but the absolute joy of the present
  In the Sunlight of beauty.

I am filled with carnivorous lust: like a tiger
I crouch and I feed on my beautiful prey:
There is nought in the monstrous world of Astarte
  So fair as thy body.

Let me lie, let me die on thy snow-coloured bosom,
I would eat of thy flesh as of delicate fruit,
I am drunk of its smell, and the scent of thy tresses
Is as flame that devours.
Thou are demon and God, thou art hell, thou art Heaven,
Thou are love that is lust, thou art lust that is love,
And I see but the heavenly grace of thy body,
A picture—a poem.

. . . . . .

And the flesh is a soul, tho' it be art eternal.

SONNET

(By George Moore. From *Pagan Poems*)

IDLY she yawned, and threw her heavy hair
Across her flesh-filled shoulders, called the maid,
And slipped her sweet blonde body out of bed,
Searching her slippers in the wintry air.

The fire shed over all a sullen glare,—
Then in her bath she sponged from foot to head,
Her body, arms, breasts, thighs, and things unsaid,
Powdered and dried herself with delicate care.

Then Zoë entered with the Figaro,
The chocolate, the letters, and the cat,
And drew the blinds to show the falling snow,
Upon the sofa still her mistress sat
Drawing along her legs, as white as milk,
Her long stockings of finely-knitted silk.

RONDO

(By George Moore. From *Flowers of Passion*. 1878)

DID I love thee? I only did desire
To hold thy body unto mine,
And smite it with strange fire
Of kisses burning as a wine,
And catch thy odorous hair, and twine
It thro' my fingers amorously.
Did I love thee?

Did I love thee? I only did desire
To watch thine eyelids lilywise
Closed down, and thy warm breath respire
As it came through the thickening sighs,
And speak my love in such fair guise
Of passion's sobbing agony.
Did I love thee?

Did I love thee? I only did desire
To drink the perfume of thy blood
In vision, and thy senses tire
Seeing them shift from ebb to flood
In consonant sweet interlude,
And if love such a thing not be,
I loved not thee.

SONNET

(By George Moore. From *Flowers of Passion*)

I AM most lovely, fair beyond desire:
My breasts are sweet, my hair is soft and bright,
And every movement flows by instinct right:
Full well I know my touch doth burn like fire,
That my voice stings the sense like smitten lyre;
I am the queen of sensuous delight;
Past years are sealed with the signet of my might;
And at my feet pale present kneels a buyer.

My beds are odorous with soft-shed scent,
And strange moon flowers a tremulous twilight air
Weave over all; and here, alone I sing
My siren songs, until all souls are bent
Within the subtle sweet melodious snare.
God, making love, made me love's grievous sting.

A SAPPHIC DREAM

(By George Moore. From *Flowers of Passion*)

I LOVE the luminous poison of the moon,
The silence of illimitable seas,
Vast night, and all her myriad mysteries,
Perfumes that make the burdened senses swoon

And weaken will, large snakes who oscillate
Like lovely girls, immense exotic flowers,
And cats who purr through silk-enfestooned bowers
Where white-limbed women sleep in sumptuous state.

My soul e'er dreams, in such a dream as this is,
Visions of perfume, moonlight and the blisses
Of sexless love, and strange unreached kisses.

SONNETS

(By Dante Gabriel Rossetti. From *The House of Life.* 1881)

VI. The Kiss

WHAT smouldering senses in death's sick delay
Or seizure of malign vicissitude
Can rob his body of honour, or denude
This soul of wedding-raiment worn to-day?
For lo! even now my lady's lips did play
With these my lips such consonant interlude
As laurelled Orpheus longed for when he wooed
The half-drawn hungering face with that lazy lay.

I was a child beneath her touch,—a man
When breast to breast we clung, even I and she,—
A spirit when her spirit looked through me,—
A god when all our life-breath met to fan
Our life-blood, till love's emulous ardours ran,
Fire within fire, desire in deity.

VII. Supreme Surrender

TO all the spirits of Love that wander by
Along his love-sown harvest-field of sleep
My lady lies apparent; and the deep
Calls to the deep; and no man sees but I.
The bliss so long afar, at length so nigh,
Rests there attained. Methinks proud Love must weep
When Fate's control doth from his harvest reap
The sacred hour for which the years did sigh.

First touched, the hand now warm around my neck
Taught memory long to mock desire: and lo!
Across my breast the abandoned hair doth flow,
Where one shorn tress long stirred the longing ache:
And next the heart that trembled for its sake
Lies the queen-heart in sovereign overthrow.

LVI. Herself

TO be a sweetness more desired than Spring;
A bodily beauty more acceptable
Than the wild rose-tree's arch that crowns the fell;
To be an essence more environing
Than wine's drained juice; a music ravishing
More than the passionate pulse of Philomel;—
To be all this 'neath one soft bosom's swell
That is the flower of life:—how strange a thing!

How strange a thing to be what Man can know
But as a sacred secret! Heaven's own screen
Hides her soul's purest depth and loveliest glow;
Closely withheld, as all things most unseen,—
The wave-bowered pearl,—the heart-shaped seal of green
That flecks the snowdrop underneath the snow.

LVII. Her Love

SHE loved him; for her infinite soul is Love,
And he her lodestar. Passion in her is
A glass facing his fire, where the bright bliss
Is mirrored, and the heat returned. Yet move
That glass, a stranger's amorous flame to prove,
And it shall turn, by instant contraries,
Ice to the moon; while her pure fire to his
For whom it burns, clings close in the heart's alcove.

Lo! they are one. With wifely breast to breast
And circling arms, she welcomes all command
Of love,—her soul to answering ardours fann'd:
Ah! who shall say she deems not loveliest
The hour of sisterly sweet hand-in-hand?

YOUTH AND LORDSHIP

(Italian Street-Song. By Dante Gabriel Rossetti)

MY young lord's the lover
Of earth and sky above,
Of youth's sway and youth's play,
Of songs and flowers and love.

Yet for love's desire
  Green youth lacks the daring;
Though one dream of fire,
  All his hours ensnaring,
  Burns the boy past bearing—
The dream that girls inspire.

My young lord's the lover
  Of every burning thought
That Love's will, that Love's skill
  Within his breast has wrought.

Lovely girl, look on him
  Soft as music's measure;
Yield him, when you've won him,
  Joys and toys at pleasure;
  But to win your treasure;
Softly look upon him.

My young lord's the lover
  Of every tender grace
That woman, to woo man,
  Can wear in form or face.

Take him to your bosom
  Now, girl, or never;
Let not your new blossom
  Of sweet kisses sever;
  Only guard for ever
Your boast within your bosom.

My young lord's the lover
  Of every secret thing,
Love-hidden, love-hidden
  This day to banqueting.

Lovely girl, with vaunting
  Never tempt to-morrow:
From all shapes enchanting
  And joy can borrow,
  Still the spectre Sorrow
Rises up for haunting.

And now my lord's the lover
  Of ah! so many a sweet,—
Of roses, of spouses,
  As many as love may greet.

THE DRYAD

(By Oscar Wilde. From *Charmides*. 1881)

I WAS the Attic shepherd's trysting place,
Beneath my shadow Amaryllis lay,
And round my trunk would laughing Daphnis chase
The timorous girl, till tired out with play
She felt his hot breath stir her tangled hair,
And turned, and looked, and fled no more from such delightful snare.

Then come away unto my ambuscade
Where clustering woodbine weaves a canopy
For amorous pleasaunce, and the rustling shade
Of Paphian myrtles seems to sanctify
The dearest rites of love, there in the cool
And green recesses of its farthest depth there is a pool,

The ouzel's haunt, the wild bee's pasturage,
For round its rim great creamy lilies float
Through their flat leaves in verdant anchorage,
Each cup a white-sailed golden-laden boat
Steered by a dragon-fly,—be not afraid
To leave this wan and wave-kissed shore, surely the place was made

For lovers such as we, the Cyprian Queen,
One arm around her boyish paramour,
Strays often there at eve, and I have seen
The moon strip off her misty vestiture
For young Endymion's eyes, be not afraid,
The panther feet of Dian never tread that secret glade.

Nay if thou wil'st, back to the beating brine,
Back to the boisterous billow let us go,
And walk all day beneath the hyaline
Huge vault of Neptune's watery portico,
And watch the purple monsters of the deep
Sport in ungainly play, and from his lair keen Xiphias leap.

For if my mistress find me lying here
She will not ruth of gentle pity show,
But lay her boat-spear down, and with austere
Relentless fingers string the cornel bow,
And draw the feathered notch against her breast,
And loose the arched cord, ay, even now upon the quest.

I hear her hurrying feet,—awake, awake,
  Thou laggard in love's battle! once at least
Let me drink deep of passion's wine, and slake
  My parched being with the nectarous feast
Which even Gods affect! O come Love come,
Still we have time to reach the cavern of thine azure home.

Scarce had she spoken when the shuddering trees
  Shook, and the leaves divided, and the air
Grew conscious of a God, and the grey seas
  Crawled backward, and a long and dismal blare
Blew from some tasselled horn, a sleuth-hound bayed,
And like a flame a barbed reed flew whizzing down the glade.

And where the little flowers of her breast
  Just brake into their milky blossoming,
This murderous paramour, this unbidden guest,
  Pierced and struck deep in horrid chambering,
And ploughed a bloody furrow with its dart,
And dug a long red road, and cleft with winged death her heart.

Sobbing her life out with a bitter cry
  On the boy's body fell the Dryad maid,
Sobbing for incomplete virginity,
  And raptures unenjoyed, and pleasures dead,
And all the pain of things unsatisfied,
And the bright drops of crimson youth crept down her throbbing side.

Ah! pitiful it was to hear her moan,
  And very pitiful to see her die
Ere she had yielded up her sweets, or known
  The joy of passion, that dread mystery
Which not to know is not to live at all,
And yet to know is to be held in death's most deadly thrall.

YOUNG CHARMIDES

(By Oscar Wilde. From *Charmides*. 1881)

IN melancholy moonless Acheron,
  Far from the goodly earth and joyous day,
Where no spring ever buds, nor ripening sun
  Weighs down the apple trees, nor flowery May
Chequers with chestnut blooms the grassy floor,
Where thrushes never sing, and piping linnets mate no more,

There by a dim and dark Lethaean well
  Young Charmides was lying, wearily
He plucked the blossoms from the asphodel,
  And with its little rifled treasury
Strewed the dull waters of the dusky stream,
And watched the white stars founder, and the land was like a dream,

When as he gazed into the watery glass
  And through his brown hair's curly tangles scanned
His own wan face, a shadow seemed to pass
  Across the mirror, and a little hand
Stole into his, and warm lips timidly
Brushed his pale cheeks, and breathed their secret forth into a sigh.

Then turned he round his weary eyes and saw,
  And ever nigher still their faces came,
And nigher ever did their young mouths draw
  Until they seemed one perfect rose of flame,
And longing arms around her neck he cast,
And felt her throbbing bosom, and his breath came hot and fast,

And all his hoarded sweets were hers to kiss,
  And all her maidenhood was his to slay,
And limb to limb in long and rapturous bliss
  Their passion waxed and waned,—O why essay
To pipe again of love too venturous reed!
Enough, enough that Eros laughed upon that flowerless mead.

Too venturous poesy O why essay
  To pipe again of passion! fold thy wings
O'er daring Icarus and bid thy lay
  Sleep hidden in the lyre's silent strings,
Till thou hast found the old Castalian rill,
Or from the Lesbian waters plucked drowned Sappho's golden quill!

Enough, enough that he whose life had been
  A fiery pulse of sin, a splendid shame,
Could in the loveless land of Hades glean
  One scorching harvest from those fields of flame
Where passion walks with naked unshod feet
And is not wounded,—ah! enough that once their lips could meet

In that wild throb when all existences
  Seemed narrowed to one single ecstasy
Which dies through its own sweetness and the stress
  Of too much pleasure, ere Persephone
Had bade them serve her by the ebon throne
Of the pale God who in the fields of Enna loosed her zone.

SAPPHIC ODES

(By Michael Field. From *Long Ago*. 1889)

MNASIDICA in form and gait
Eclipses her ill-favoured mate
  Gyrinna; when I call,
I tremble lest the girl appear
Whose very shadow on the wall
Repulses me, and when I hear
Her rude, slow step I shake with fear.

Her gesture has no rhythmic law;
She knows not how her dress to draw
  About her ankles thin;
And let the luckless child take care
Firmly her chiton-brooch to pin,
For, oh, she must not ever dare
To leave her flabby shoulder bare!

But when Mnasidica doth raise
Her arm to feed the lamp I gaze
  Glad at the lovely curve;
And when her pitcher at the spring
She fills, I watch her tresses swerve
And drip, then pause to see her wring
Her hair, and back the bright drops fling.

And now she leaves my maiden train!
Those whom I love most give me pain:
  Why should I love her so?
Gyrinna hath a gentle face,
And the harmonious soul, I know,
Not very long can lack the trace,
O Aphrodite, of thy grace.

MAIDS not to you my mind doth change;
Men I defy, allure, estrange,
Prostrate, make bond or free:
Soft as the stream beneath the plane
To you I sing my love's refrain;
Between us is no thought of pain,
Peril, satiety.

Soon doth a lover's patience tire,
But ye to manifold desire
Can yield response, ye know
When for long, museful days I pine,
The presage at my heart divine;
To you I never breathed a sign
Of inward want or woe.

When injuries my spirit bruise,
Allaying virtue ye infuse
With unobtrusive skill:
And if care frets ye come to me
As fresh as nymph from stream or tree,
And with your soft vitality
My weary bosom fill.

FOOL, faint not thou!" I laughed in blame
O Larichus, pale in the flame
Of Hymen's torches: while, alas,
I feel my senses swoon,
Or quicken with delight
At Nature's simplest boon:
Unmoved I cannot pass
The fine bloom of the grass,
Or watch the dimpling shadows on the white,
Vibrating poplar with unshaken frame.

"Faint not," I said—and yet my breath
Comes sharp as I were nigh to death
If suddenly across the grove
The lovely laugh I hear,
Or catch the lovely speech
Of one who makes a peer
Of the blest gods above
The man she deigns to love:
O Anactoria, wast thou born to teach
Sappho how vainly she admonisheth?

"Faint not"—the poet must dare all;
Me no experience shall appal,
No pang that can make shrill my song:
  Though Atthis, hateful, flit
  From my fond arms, and by
  Andromeda dare sit,
  I will not let my strong
  Heart fail, will bear the wrong,
With piercing accents for Adonis cry,
Or thrice on perished Timas vainly call.

"Faint not," I said. Would'st thou be great,
Thou must with every shock vibrate
That life can bring thee; seek and yearn;
  Feel in thyself the stroke
  Of love, although it rive
  As mountain-wind an oak;
  Let jealous passion burn
  If Rhodope must turn
To other love; and laugh that age should strive
The ardours of thy bosom to abate.

ADOWN the Lesbian vales,
  When spring first flashes out,
  I watch the lovely rout
Of maidens flitting 'mid the honey-bees
  For thyme and heath,
  Cistus, and trails
  Of myrtle-wreath:
  They bring me these
My passionate, unsated sense to please.

  In turn, to please my maids,
  Most deftly will I sing
  Of their soft cherishing
In apple-orchards with cool waters by,
  Where slumber streams
  From quivering shades,
  And Cypris seems
  To bend and sigh,
Her golden calyx offering amorously.

  What praises would be best
  Wherewith to crown my girls?
  The rose when she unfurls

Her balmy, lighted buds is not so good,
So fresh as they
When on my breast
They lean, and say
All that they would,
Opening their glorious, candid maidenhood.

To that pure band alone
I sing of marriage-loves;
As Aphrodite's doves
Glance in the sun their colour comes and goes:
No girls let fall
Their maiden zone
At Hymen's call
Serene as those
Taught by a poet why sweet Hesper glows.

NIGHT fell: Selene proud and pale
Rose and put on her arched veil,
And lifting to her brow the crescent small,
The firm, young curve she deigns to wear.
Went forth into the silent air,
And noiseless brought her white team from the stall.

Cold was her figure, and her breast
Secure and hard; her eyes confessed
No yearning; she was whole from love, and strong
With undivided mind. Thus she
In her complete virginity
Austerely brilliant urged her steeds along;

Until she came where Latmos sent
Its rocks into her path; she bent
To see how she should guide the wheels aright,
When, just where gentler darkness made
A cave apparent by its shade,
The loveliest mortal form grew on her sight.

She dropt the reins, the horses reared
In tumult as the hand that steered
That course grew impotent—a moment's change!
As her intact and tranquil life
Was devastated by a strife
She could not master, tyrannous and strange.

Fear fell upon her, and the wild
Revolt of chastity beguiled,
Of pureness grown a passion against fate;
Yet an inevitable joy,
As her slant chariot toward the boy
Rolled down, o'ercame her fierce recoil and hate.

He had flung by his shepherd's dress,
And in the grace of weariness
Lay simple, calm, and happy, unaware
The flashing beauty of his form
Was filling the soft clouds with storm,
And tempting Thia's stately child to bare

Her face and worship. Oh, she drooped
Her long wings round her, as she stooped
Close to his cheek, his eyes, his very breath!
But ere, in that profound eclipse,
She brake the fountain of her lips
O'er her beloved, in swoon as deep as death

She laid him; then securely spent
Her virgin frenzy innocent,
Then took her maiden pleasure unespied;
And, sealing the dark cavern where
He lay asleep, resumed her care,
With steady hand her steeds through heaven to guide.

But nightly form Meander's stream
Southward she turns her snowy team
Behind the further slope of Latmos' height,
Pierces unseen a mountain-rift,
Then climbs the air, effulgent, swift,
And fills the lovely river-bed with light.

EROTOMACHIA

(By Herbert P. Horne. From *Diversi Colores*. 1891)

LO! how her eyes, lo! how her hands,
How every action, which she hath,
Are ever, through the fallen lands
Whence is the victory of her path,
Swords, whose dominion knows no bounds;
But makes us bleed,
And need
Her lips to mend the wounds.

Ye blessed arrows of that Dear,
  Make speed, with all your sweet alarms;
Make speed, that Love may quickly bear
My pierced body to her arms:
Haste ye, whose battle knows no bounds;
  But makes us bleed,
    And need
Her lips to mend the wounds.

LILY DALE

(By John Davidson. From *In a Music Hall.* 1891)

SHE'S thirty, this feminine cove,
  And she looks it at hand, you'll allow.
I was once on the streets. By Jove,
  I was handsomer then than now.

Thin lips, oh, you bet! and deep lines.
  So I powder and paint as you see;
And that's bella donna that—shines
  Where a dingier light ought to be.

But I'm plump, and my legs—do you doubt me,—
  You'll see when I go on the stage!
And there isn't a pad, sir, about me;
  I'm a proper good girl for my age!

I can't sing a bit, I can't shout;
  But I go through my songs with a birr;
And I always contrive to bring out
The meaning that tickles you, sir.

They were written for me; they're the rage;
  They're the plainest, the wildest, the shyest—;
For I find on the music-hall stage,
  That that kind of song goes the highest.

So I give it them hot, with a glance
  Like the crack of a whip—oh, it stings!
And a still, fiery smile, and a dance
  That indicates naughtiest things.

And I like it. It isn't the best:
  There are nurses and nuns, and good wives;
But life's pretty much of a jest,
  And you can't very well lead two lives.

But sometimes wild eyes will grow tame,
  And a voice have a tone—oh, you men!
And a beard please me—oh, there's my name!
  Well, I take a week's holiday then.

THE BARBER

(By John Gray. From *Silverpoints*. 1893)

I DREAMED I was a barber; and there went
  Beneath my hand, oh! names extravagant.
Beneath my trembling fingers, many a mask
Of many a pleasant girl. It was my task
To gild their hair, carefully, strand by strand;
To paint their eyebrows with a timid hand;
To draw a bodkin, from a vase of kohl,
Through the closed lashes; pencils from a bowl
Of Sepia to paint them underneath;
To blow upon their eyes with a soft breath.
They lay them back and watched the leaping bands.

The dream grew vague. I moulded with my hands
The mobile breasts, the valley; and the waist
I touched; and pigments reverently placed
Upon their thighs in sapient spots and stains,
Beryls and crysolites and diaphanes,
And gems whose hot harsh names are never said,
I was a masseur; and my fingers bled
With wonder as I touched their awful limbs.

Suddenly, in the marble trough, there seems
O, last of my pale mistresses, Sweetness!
A twy-lipped scarlet pansy. My caress
Tinge thy steel-gray eyes to violet.
Adown thy body skips the pit-a-pat
Of treatment once heard in a hospital
For plagues that fascinate, but half appal.

So, at the sound, the blood of one stood cold.
My chaste hair ripened into sudden gold.
The throat, the shoulders, swelled and were uncouth
The breasts rose up and offered each a mouth.
And on the belly pallid bushes crept,
That maddened me, until I laughed and wept.

FROM THE SONGS OF BILITTS

(By Pierre Louÿs. 1894. Translated from the French by Horace M. Brown. 1904)

DANCES BY MOONLIGHT

UPON the soft grass, in the night, the young girls with hair of violets have all danced together, one of each pair playing the part of lover.

The virgins said: "We are not for you." And as if they were ashamed, they hid their virginity. A satyr played upon the flute under the trees.

The others said: "We have come to seek you." They arranged their tunics about them like the dress of men; and they struggled in ecstasy while entwining their dancing legs.

Then each one feeling herself vanquished, took her lover by the ears even as one takes a beaker by the two handles, and, the head bent forward, drank a kiss.

CONFIDENCES

THE next day I went again to see her. We blushed as soon as each saw the other. She led me into her chamber that we might be alone.

I had much to say to her, but in seeing her, I forgot all. I did not dare throw myself upon her neck, and I gazed curiously upon her high-tied sash.

I was astonished that there was no change in her face; she seemed still my friend, and yet, nevertheless, since yesterday she had learned so many things that astonished me.

Impulsively I sat myself upon her knees, and took her in my arms. Quickly, anxious, I whispered in her ear. Then she laid her cheek against mine and told me all.

THE TRESSES

HE said to me, "Last night I dreamed.
Thy locks were swept about my neck.
I had thy hair, like a black necklace,
All about my nape, and spread upon my breast.

"I kissed it, and it was mine;
And by it we were bound together for all time;
With lip upon lip, and intertwining locks,
We were one, like two laurels with one root.

"And little by little it seemed to me,
So were our limbs confused,
I became thyself, and that thou
Entered into me like my thought."

When he had finished speaking,
Softly he laid his hand upon my shoulders,
Into my eyes he gazed so tenderly,
That I lowered my glance, shivering.

REMORSE

AT first I would not reply, and my shame showed upon my cheeks, and the beating of my heart brought pain to my breasts.

Then I resisted, I told him "No! No!"—I turned my head away, and his kiss did not open my lips,—nor love, my tight-closed knees.

Then he begged me to forgive him, kissed my hair, I felt his burning breath, and he went away. . . . Now I am alone.

I gaze upon the empty place, the deserted wood, the trampled earth. And I bite my fingers until they bleed, and I stifle my sobs in the grass.

BILITIS

ONE woman may robe herself in a tunic of white wool. Another dress in a garment of silk and gold. Another covers herself with flowers, with leaves and grapes.

As for me, I take no joy of life except when naked. My lover takes me just as I am; without robes, or jewels, or sandals. Behold me, Bilitis, naked, alone.

My hair is black with its own blackness, my lips are red with their own color. My locks float about me free and round, like feathers.

Take me as my mother made me in a night of love long past; and if I please you thus, forget not to tell me.

THE LITTLE HOUSE

THE little house in which is his bed is the prettiest in all the world. It is made with the branches of trees, four walls of dried earth, and a roof of thatch.

I love it, for, since the nights have grown cold, we have slept there together: and the cooler the nights are the longer are they also. When I rise with the coming of the day, even I, find myself weary.

The mattress is upon the ground: two coverlids of black wool cover our bodies, which warm each other. His body presses against my breasts. My heart throbs.

He presses me so closely that he will crush me, poor little girl that I am. But when he is within me, I know nothing more in the world, and they might cut off my limbs without recalling me from my ecstasy.

DESIRE

SHE entered, and passionately, the eyes half closed, she fixed her lips to mine, and our tongues touched each other. . . . Never in my life have I had a kiss like that one.

She stood erect before (against) me, full of love and consentment. One of my knees, little by little, mounted between her hot thighs, which gave way as though to a lover.

My wandering hand upon her tunic sought to divine the naked body, which softly bent like waves, or arching, stiffened itself with shiverings of the skin.

With her eyes in delirium she signs toward the bed: but we have not the right to indulge our love before the ceremony of the wedding, and brusquely we separate.

ENDEARMENTS

CLOSE softly thine arms about me like a girdle. Oh, touch, touch my skin thus! Neither water, nor the breath of the south wind are softer than thy hand.

To-day endear me, little sister, it is thy turn. Remember thou the endearments that I taught thee last night, and kneel thou near to me who am fatigued; kneel thou in silence.

Thy lips descend upon my lips. All thine undone hair follows them, as a caress follows a kiss. Thy locks glide upon my left breast; they hide thine eyes.

Give me thy hand, it is hot! Press mine and leave it not. Hands better than lips unite, and their passion is equalled by nothing.

THE KISS

I WOULD kiss the whole length of the rich black locks that grace thy neck like wings; oh! sweet bird, oh! captured dove, whose passion-filled heart beats under my hand.

I would take thy lips between mine own, as a babe takes the breast of its mother. Tremble!—Thrill! Sweet one,—my kisses reach far, and should satisfy thy love.

Lightly will I touch thy breasts and arms with my tongue and lips, and behind thine ears, and upon thy neck I will leave the marks of my kisses; and while I kiss thee my hands shall stray in mad delight over the ivory nakedness of thy sensitive body, trembling under the touch of my nails.

Listen, Mnasidika! Hear the murmuring of my love in thine ears, like the wild humming of the sea. Mnasidika, thy look drives me mad; I will close thy burning eyes with a kiss, as if they were thy lips.

THE DESPAIRING EMBRACE

LOVE me, not with smiles, or with flutes, or with the plaited flowers, but with thy heart and with thy tears, even as I love thee with my sorrowing breast, and my moans.

When thy breasts alternate with my breasts, when I feel thy life touch my life, when thy knees stand up behind me, then my panting mouth knows not more how to join itself to thine.

Press me to thee as I press thee to me! See, the lamp has died down; the darkness is upon us; but I press thy moving body, and I hear thy perpetual plaint.

Moan! Moan! oh, woman! Eros leads us in sorrow. Thou shalt suffer less when thou liest upon a bed to bring a child into the world, than when thou givest birth to thy love.

ABSENCE

SHE has gone out, she is far from me, but I see her, for all things in the room, all pertain to her, and I, like all the rest.

This bed still warm, over which I let my lips wander, is disordered with the imprint of her form. Upon this soft cushion has lain her little head enveloped in its wealth of hair.

This basin is that in which she hath bathed; this comb has penetrated the knots of her tangled locks. These slippers beg for her naked feet. These pockets of gauze contained her breasts.

But what I dare not touch, is the mirror in which she gazed upon her hot bruises, and where perhaps remains still the reflection of her moist lips.

AN EVENING BY THE FIRE

THE winter is cold, Mnasidika. All is cold outside our bed. Rise, then, come with me, for I have lit a great fire with dead twigs and with split branches.

We will warm ourselves kneeling, all naked, our hair hanging upon our backs, and we will drink milk together from the same cup, and we will eat cakes with honey.

How gay and noisy is the flame! Art thou not too near? Thy skin becomes red. Let me kiss it wherever the fire has made it burning.

In the midst of the firebrands I will heat the iron and will dress thine hair here. With the charred splinters I will write thy name upon the wall.

WAITING

THE sun has passed the whole of the night among the dead while I wait for her, seated upon my bed, weak with watching. The wick of the exhausted lamp has burned even to the end.

She will never come again—the last star fades. I know she will never return. I know even the name that I hate. Nevertheless I wait still.

Oh, that she would come now! Yes, that she would come, her hair disordered and without roses, her robes rumpled, soiled, and awry, her tongue dry, and her eyelids black!

As soon as she shall open the door, I will say to her . . . But, her she is . . . It is her robe that I shall touch. Her hands. Her hair. Her skin! I kiss her with unquestioning lips, and I weep.

GYRINNO

BELIEVE not that I have ever loved thee. I have eaten thee as I would a ripe fig, I have drank thee as I would drink hot water, I have carried thee about me like a belt of skin.

I have amused myself with thy body because thou hast short hair and pointed breasts upon thy thin chest, and black nipples like two little dates.

Just as one must have water and fruit, a woman is also necessary, but already I have forgotten thy name, thou, who hast passed between my arms like the shadow of another adored one.

Between thy flesh and mine a burning dream has possessed me. I pressed thee upon me as though upon a wound, and I cried, Mnasidika! Mnasidika! Mnasidika!

I SING OF MY FLESH AND MY LIFE

SURELY I will not sing of famous lovers of the past. If they are not more, why speak of them? Am I not like unto them? Have I not enough to do to think of myself?

Pasiphae, I will forget thee, although thy passion was extreme. Syrinx, I will not praise thee, nor thee, Byblis, nor—by the goddess chosen before all—thee, O Helene of the white arms.

If any among ye have suffered, I feel it not. If any of ye have loved, I have loved more. I sing of my flesh and of my life, and not of the sterile shadows of buried loves.

Lie at ease, O my body, following thy voluptuous mission! Taste thy daily pleasure and thy passion without tomorrow. Leave not a single joy unknown, lest it be regretted at the day of thy death.

THE PERFUMES

I WILL perfume all my skin that I may attract lovers. Upon my beautiful legs, in a basin of silver, I will pour the spikenard of Tarsos, and the metopion of Egypt.

Under my arms, crushed mint; upon my eyebrows and upon my eyes, marjolaine of Koos. Slave, take down my hair and fill it with the smoke of incense.

Behold the oinathe (briony) of the mountains of Kypros; I will let it run between my breasts; the liquor of roses which comes from Phaselis, shall embalm my neck and my cheeks.

And come, pour out upon my loins the irresistible bakkaris (unula). It is better for a courtesan that she should know the perfumes of Lydia, than the customs of the Peloponnesus.

CONVERSATION

GOOD morning.—To you good morning.—Thou art in a hurry.—Perhaps less than you think.—Thou art a pretty girl.—Perhaps prettier than you believe.

"What is thy charming name?—I will not tell you that so quickly.—Thou hast no one for this evening?—Always my lover.—And how do you love him?—Any way he wishes.

"Shall we sup together?—If thou wishest. But what will you give me?—This.—Five drachmas? That must be for my slave. And for me?—Name the sum.—An hundred.

"Where dost thou live?—In this blue house.—At what hour may I send for thee?—At once, if you wish.—At once, then.—Go before, I will follow."

THE INDIFFERENT ONE

SINCE he has entered my chamber whoever may he be (that is his affair): "See," I say to the slave, "what a beautiful man! And how happy should be a courtesan!"

I call him Adonis, Ares, Herkales, according to his face, or the Old Man of the Sea, if his hair is silver pale. And then who cares for fickle youth!

"Ah!" I say, "if to-day I had not to pay my florist and my jeweler, how I would like to tell thee, I do not wish thy money! I am thy passionate servant!"

Then, when he has closed his arms over my shoulders, I see a boatman of the port pass like a divine image over the starry heaven of my transparent lids.

TO HER BREASTS

FLESH-LIKE flowers, O my breasts: how rich you are in voluptuousness! My breasts in my hands, what lack you of softness, and of mellow warmth and of youthful perfume?

Already you are polished like the breasts of a statue, and hard like the insensible marble. In order that you may submit, I will cherish you the more, you that were already loved.

Your sleek and rounded form is the honor of my brown body, whether I imprison you under a necklace of gold, or leave you free and naked, you precede me with your splendor.

Be then happy this night. If my fingers toy with you in caresses, you alone will know them until to-morrow morning; for this night Bilitis has paid Bilitis.

INTIMACIES

WHY am I become Lesbian, O Bilitis, thou askest me? But what player of the flute is not a Lesbian in some degree? I am poor; I have no bed; I lie with her who wishes me, and I thank her with that which I have.

When we are small we already dance naked; and what dances? Thou knowest, my dear one: the twelve desires of Aphrodite. We look each upon the other, we compare the beauty of our nakedness, and we find it beautiful.

During the long night we are warmed by the pleasure of the lookers-on; but our ardor is not feigned, and so strongly do we feel it, that sometimes, behind the doors, one of us may embrace a companion who consents.

How do we make love with a man who is rude to us? He takes us as he would a woman, and leaves us before the orgasm. Thou, that art a woman and knowest what I mean. Thou canst take it as for thyself.

ADVICE TO A LOVER

IF thou wouldst be loved by a woman, O young friend, whoever she may be, tell her not that thou wouldst have her, but let her see thee every day; then disappear, to return.

If she addresses her speech to thee, be amorous without eagerness. She will come of herself to thee. But thou must take her by force, the day when she intends to give herself to thee.

When thou receivest her in thy bed, neglect thine own pleasure. The hands of an amorous woman are trembling and without caresses. Forgive them their lack of zeal.

But as for thee, take no repose. Prolong thy kisses till thou losest breath. Let her not sleep, even though she begs it of thee. Kiss always that part of her body to which she turns her eyes.

THE LAST LOVER

COME, boy, pass me not by without having first loved me. I am still beautiful at night. Thou shalt see that my autumn is warmer than the spring-time of another.

Seek not for love among virgins. Love is a difficult art in which young girls are little learned. I have studied it all my life in order to give it to my last lover.

My last lover, that shall be thou, I know it. Behold my mouth, for which an entire people has paled with desire. Behold my hair, the same hair that Psappha the Great has sung.

I will gather in thy favor all that is left of my lost youth. I will destroy the memories themselves. I will give to thee the flute of Lykas, the girdle of Mnasidika.

THE WARM GIRDLE

THOU thinkest thou lovest me no more, Teleas, and since a month thou passest thy nights at table, as if the fruits, the wines, the honey, could make thee forget my lips. Thou thinkest that thou lovest me no more, poor fool!"

Saying that, I untied my moist girdle and rolled it about his head. It was still all warm with the heat of my body; the perfume of my skin poured out of its fine meshes.

He breathed with long breaths, his eyes closed; then I felt that he returned to me, and even saw clearly his desires reawaken, and he hid them not, but, as a ruse, I knew how to resist.

"No, my friend, this night, Lysippos possesses me. Adieu!" And I added as I fled: "Oh, gourmand of fruits and wines! The little garden of Bilitis has but one fig, but it is good."

EROS

(From *Aphrodite by Pierre Louÿs.* Translated by Mitchell S. Buck. 1913)

"DEEP in the lurking shadows of the woods,
Down vistas gold-flecked from the sunlight glare,
The Satyrs fast pursue the Oreads.
Clutching their virgin breasts and flying hair,
Bending their gleaming bodies, tense with fear,
Swift backward on the damp moss. Half divine,
Writhing with pain. . . .
O Women!
On your soft lips, Eros cries
Desires and agonies."
"Eros! Eros!"

"Cybele long pursues across the plains
The godlike Attis whom her love desires,
The fleeting Attis who her love disdains
For Eros, like a cruel god, conspires
To chill return where burning love aspires,
And, in despair, through Attis halting breath,
Cybele weaves of death. . . .
Slaying with tortured cries,
Desires and agonies. . . ."
"Eros! Eros!"

"Before the Goat-foot, over flowery meads—
Toward the watery tomb, frail Syrinx speeds,
Shuddering at Eros' kiss upon her cheek—
Eros who, later, culls the trembling reeds,
Caresses them and, living, makes them speak
For he who conquers Gods, who death disdains—
Pale Eros—reigns. . . .
O Women!
From a dead soul, Eros cries
Desires and agonies."

STELLA MARIS

(By Arthur Symons. From *London Nights.* 1895)

WHY is it I remember yet
You, of all women one has met,
In random wayfare, as one meets
The chance romances of the streets,

The Juliet of a night? I know
Your heart holds many a Romeo.
And I, who call to mind your face
In so serene a pausing-place,
Where the bright pure expanse of sea,
Seem a reproach to you and me,
I too have sought on many a breast
The ecstacy of an unrest,
I too have had my dreams, and met
(Ah me!) how many a Juliet.
Why is it, then, that I recall
You, neither first nor last of all?
For, surely as I see to-night
The phantom of the lighthouse light,
Against the sky, across the bay,
Fade, and return, and fade away,
So surely do I see your eyes
Out of the empty night arise;
Child, you arise and smile to me
Out of the night, out of the sea,
The Nereid of a moment there,
And is it seaweed in your hair?

O lost and wrecked, how long ago,
Out of the drowning past, I know
You come to call me, come to claim
My share of your delicious shame.
Child, I remember, and can tell
One night we loved each other well,
And one night's love, at least or most
Is not so small a thing to boast.
You were adorable, and I
Adored you to infinity,
That nuptial night too briefly borne
To the oblivion of morn.
Ah! no oblivion, for I feel
Your lips delirously steal
Along my neck, and fasten there;
I feel the perfume of your hair,
I feel your breast that heaves and dips
Desiring my desirous lips,
And that ineffable delight
When souls turn bodies, and unite
In the intolerable, the whole
Rapture of the embodied soul.

That joy was ours, we passed it by;
You have forgotten me, and I

Remember you thus strangely, won
An instant from oblivion.
And I, remembering, would declare
That joy, not shame, is ours to share,
Joy that we had the frank delight
To choose the chances of one night,
Out of vague nights, and days at strife,
So infinitely full of life.
What shall it profit me to know
Your heart holds many a Romeo?
Why should I grieve, though I forget
How many another Juliet?
Let us be glad to have forgot
That roses fade, and loves are not,
As dreams, immortal, though they seem
Almost as real as a dream.
It is for this I see you rise,
A wraith, with starlight in your eyes,
Where calm hours weave, for such a mood
Solitude out of solitude;
For this, for this, you come to me
Out of the night, out of the sea.

IDEALISM

(By Arthur Symons. 1895)

I KNOW the woman has no soul, I know
The woman has no possibilities
Of soul or mind or heart, but merely is
The masterpiece of flesh: well, be it so.
It is her flesh that I adore; I go
Thirsting afresh to drain her empty kiss;
I know she cannot love; 'tis not for this
I rush to her embraces like a foe.
Tyrannously I crave, I crave alone,
Her body, now a silent instrument,
That at my touch shall wake and make for me
The strains that I have dreamed of, and not known;
Her perfect body, Earth's most eloquent
Music, the divine human harmony.

LEVES AMORES

(By Arthur Symons. 1895)

YOUR kisses, and the way you curl,
Delicious and distracting girl,
Into one's arms, and round about,
Inextricably in and out
Twining luxuriously, as twine
The clasping tangles of the vine;
So loving to be loved, so gay
And greedy for our holiday;
Strong to embrace and long to kiss,
And strenuous for the sharper bliss,
A little tossing sea of sighs,
Till the slow calm seal up your eyes.
And then how prettily you sleep!
You nestle close and let me keep
My straying fingers in the nest
Of your warm comfortable breast;
And as I dream, lying awake,
Of sleep well wasted for your sake,
I feel the very pulse and heat
Of your young life-blood beat, and beat
With mine; and you are mine; my sweet!

TO ONE IN ALIENATION

(By Arthur Symons. 1895)

I

LAST night I saw you decked to meet
The coming of those most reluctant feet:
The little bonnet that you wear
When you would fain, for his sake, be more fair;
The primrose ribbons that so grace
The perfect pallor of your face;
The dark gown folded back about the throat,
The folds of lacework that denote
All that beneath them, just beneath them, lies,
Waiting his eyes.

So the man came and took you; and we lay
So near and yet so far away,
You in his arms, awake for joy, and I
Awake for very misery,

Cursing a sleepless brain that would but scrawl
Your image on the aching wall,
That would but pang me with the sense
Of that most sweet accursed violence
Of lovers' hands that weary to caress
(Those hands!) your unforbidden loveliness.

And with the dawn that vision came again
To an unrested and recurrent brain:
To think your body, warm and white,
Lay in his arms all night;
That it was given him to surprise,
With those unhallowed eyes,
The secrets of your beauty, hid from me,
That I may never (may I never?) see:
I who adore you, he who finds in you
(Poor child!) a half-forgotten point of view.

II

As I lay on the stranger's bed,
And clasped the stranger-woman I had hired,
Desiring only memory dead
Of all that I had once desired;

It was then that I wholly knew
How wholly I had loved you, and, my friend,
While I am I, and you are you,
How I must love you to the end.

For I lay in her arms awake,
Awake and cursing the indifferent night,
That ebbed so slowly, for your sake,
My heart's desire, my soul's delight;

For I lay in her arms awake,
Awake in such a solitude of shame,
That when I kissed her, for your sake,
My lips were sobbing on your name.

VARIATIONS UPON LOVE

(By Arthur Symons. 1895)

I

FOR God's sake, let me love you, and give over
These tedious protestations of a lover;
We're of one mind to love, and there's no let;
Remember that, and all the rest forget;

And let's be happy, mistress, while we may,
Ere you to-morrow shall be called to-day,
To-morrow may be heedless, idle-hearted:
One night's enough for love to have met and parted.
Then be it now, and I'll not say that I
In many several deaths for you would die;
And I'll not ask you to declare that you
Will longer love than women mostly do.
Leave words to them whom words, not doings, move,
And let our silence answer for our love.

II

O woman! I am jealous of the eyes
That look upon you; all my looks are spies
That do but lurk and follow you about,
Restless to find some guilty secret out.
I am unhappy if I see you not,
Unhappy if I see you; tell me what
That smile betokens? what close thing is hid
Beneath the half-way lifting of a lid?
Who is it, tell me, I so dread to meet,
Just as we turn the corner of the street?
Daily I search your baffling eyes to see
Who knows what new admitted company?
And, sick with dread to find things I seek,
I tremble at the name you do not speak.
Leave words to them whom words, not doings, move,
And let our silence answer for our love.

III

I know your lips are bought like any fruit;
I know your love, and of your love the root;
I know your kisses toll for love that dies
In kissing, to be buried in your eyes;
I know I am degraded for your sake,
And that my shame will not so much as make
Your glory, or be reckoned in the debt
Of memories you are mindful to forget.
All this I know, and knowing it, I come
Delighted to my daily martyrdom;
And, rich in love beyond the common store,
Become for you a beggar, to implore
The broken crumbs that from your table fall,
Freely, in your indifference, on all.

IV

I loved her; and you say she loved me not.
Well, if I loved her? And if she forgot,
Well, I have not forgotten even yet:
Time, and spent tears, may teach me to forget:
And so she loves another, and did then
When she was heaven and earth to me, and when,
Truly, she made me happy. It may be:
I only know how good she was to me.
Friend, to have loved, to have been made happy thus,
What better fate has life in store for us,
The dream of life from which we have to wake,
Happier, why not? why not for a dream's sake?
To have been loved is well, and well enough
For any man: but 'tis enough to love.

BIANCA

(By Arthur Symons. 1895)

I

HER cheeks are hot, her cheeks are white;
The white girl hardly breathes to-night,
So faint the pulses come and go,
That waken to a smouldering glow
The morbid faintness of her white.

What drowsing heats of sense, desire
Longing and languorous, the fire
Or what white ashes, subtly mesh
The fascinations of her flesh
Into a breathing web of fire?

Only her eyes, only her mouth,
Live, in the agony of drouth,
Athirst for that which may not be:
The desert of virginity
Aches in the hotness of her mouth.

I take her hands into my hands,
Silently, and she understands;
I set my lips upon her lips;
Shuddering to her finger-tips
She strains my hands within her hands.

I set my lips on hers; they close
Into a false and phantom rose;
Upon her thirsting lips I rain
A flood of kisses, and in vain;
Her lips inexorably close.

Through her closed lips that cling to mine,
Her hands that hold me and entwine,
Her body that abandoned lies,
Rigid with sterile ecstasies,
A shiver knits her flesh to mine.

Life sucks into a mist remote
Her fainting lips, her throbbing throat;
Her lips that open to my lips,
And, hot against my finger-tips,
The pulses leaping in her throat.

LIBER AMORIS

(By Arthur Symons. 1895)

WHAT'S virtue, Bianca? Have we not
Agreed the word should be forgot,
That ours be every dear device
And all the subtleties of vice,
And, in diverse imaginings,
The savour of forbidden things,
So only that the obvious be
Too obvious for you and me,
And the one vulgar final act
Remain an unadmitted fact?

And, surely, we were wise to waive
A gift we do not lose, but save.
What moment's reeling blaze of sense
Were rationally recompense
For all the ecstasies and all
The ardours demi-virginal?
Bianca, I tell you, no delights
Of long, free, unforbidden nights,
Have richlier filled and satisfied
The eager moments as they died,
That your voluptuous pretence
Of unacquainted innocence,
Your clinging hands and closing lips
And eyes slow sinking to eclipse

And cool throat flushing to my kiss;
That sterile and mysterious bliss,
Mysterious, and yet to me
Deeper for that dubiety.

Once but that time was long ago,
I loved good women, and to know
That lips my lips dared never touch
Could speak, in one warm smile, so much.
And it seemed infinitely sweet
To worship at a woman's feet,
And live on heavenly thoughts of her,
Till earth itself grew heavenlier.
But that rapt mood, being fed on air,
Turned at the last to a despair,
And, for a body and soul like mine,
I found the angel's food too fine.
So the mood changed, and I began
To find that man is merely man,
Though women might be angels; so,
I let the aspirations go,
And for a space I held it wise
To follow after certainties.
My heart forgot the ways of love,
No longer now my fancy wove
Into admitted ornament
In spider's web of sentiment.
What my hands seized, that my hands held,
I followed as the blood compelled,
And finding that my brain found rest
On some unanalytic breast,
I was contented to discover
How easy 'tis to be a lover.
No sophistries to ravel out,
No devious maytyrdoms of doubt,
Only the good firm flesh to hold,
The love well worth its weight in gold,
Love, sinking from the infinite,
Now just enough to last one night.
So the simplicity of flesh
Held me a moment in its mesh,
Till that too palled, and I began
To find that man is mostly man
In that, his will being sated, he
Wills ever new variety.
And then I found you, Bianca! Then
I found in you, I found again

That chance or will or fate had brought
The curiosity I sought.
Ambiguous child, whose life retires
Into the pulse of those desires
Of whose endured possession speaks
The passionate pallor of your cheeks;
Child, in whom neither good nor ill
Can sway your sick and swaying will,
Only the aching sense of sex
Wholly controls, and does perplex,
With dubious drifts scarce understood,
The shaken currents of your blood;
It is your ambiguity
That speaks to me and conquers me,
Your capturing heats of captive bliss,
Under my hands, under my kiss,
And your strange reticences, strange
Concessions, your elusive change,
The strangeness of your smile, the faint
Corruption of your gaze, a saint
Such as Luini loved to paint.
What's virtue, Bianca? nay, indeed,
What's vice? for I at last am freed,
With you, of virtue and of vice:
I have discovered Paradise.
And Paradise is neither heaven,
Where the spirits of men burn pure,
Nor is it hell, where souls endure
An equal ecstasy of fire,
In like repletion of desire;
Nay, but a subtlier intense
Unsatisfied appeal of sense,
Ever desiring, ever near
The goal of all its hope and fear,
Ever a hair's-breadth from the goal.

So Bianca satisfies my soul.

TWO SONNETS

(By Arthur Symons. From *Amoris Victima.* 1897)

ALL that I know of love I learnt of you,
And I know all that lover ever knew,
Since, passionately loving to be loved,
The subtlety of your wise body moved
My senses to a curiosity,

And your wise heart adorned itself for me.
Did you not teach me how to love you, how
To win you, how to suffer for you now,
Since you have made, as long as life endures,
My very nerves, my very senses, yours?
I suffer for you now with that same skill
Of self-consuming ecstasy, whose thrill
(May Death some day the thought of it remove!)
You gathered from the very hands of Love.

* * * * *

I cannot do without you: you have been
Too long my only slave, my only queen.
I cannot do without you: you have grown
Part of my flesh, and nearer than my own.
I need you! Speak, be silent, frown or smile,
Only be with me for a little while,
And let your face and hands and hair be kissed,
And let me feel your fingers on my wrist.
I cannot do without you. Other men
Love, bid good-bye, and turn to love again;
I only know I want you, only you,
Only because I want you. If you knew how much
I hunger, should I hunger, for your touch?

THE REHEARSAL

(Anonymous. (U. S.) 1895)

I SIT here thinking, Will, of you,
Of merry days gone by—
The old church, where oft we sang
Together, you and I;
But thoughts of one rehearsal night
Will constantly arise,
Till *"I can read my title clear*
To mansions in the skies."

I'm thinking of the rainy night—
The rest had hurried home—
And we, in Deacon Foster's pew,
Were sitting all alone;
You were a "seeker" then, dear Will,
But not of "things above"—
"The length, the depth, the breadth, the height
Of everlasting love."

And I was on the "anxious" seat,
Uncertain how to move,
Within thine arms of love embraced,
Thy constancy to prove!
And oh! the promises you made—
You were my own dear Will—
"What peaceful hours I once enjoyed,
How sweet their memory still."

Oh! what sweet words of love you spoke,
And kissed away the tear;
And how I trembled at the thought
Lest someone should appear;
But when you turned the lights all out,
To guard against surprise,
"I bade farewell to every fear,
And wiped my weeping eyes."

I thought, could I these doubts remove,
These gloomy doubts that rise,
"And see the Caanan that we love
With unbeclouded eyes!"
And as you climbed the pulpit stairs,
And viewed the landscape o'er,
"Not Jordan's stream, not death's cold flood
Could fright us from the floor."

And when you fixed the cushions up,
And I reclined at ease,
The pulpit pillow 'neath my head,
And you on bended knees;
With your warm kisses on my lips,
How could I stay your hand;
"The veil was lifted, and by faith,
You viewed the promised land."

And oh! what rapturous feelings
Thrilled every nerve, and when
I cried, "Oh! Lord my heart is touched,"
You shouted out "Amen."
My very soul was all ablaze,
I thought that I could see
"The land of rest, the saints delight
The heaven prepared for me."

I thought "a charge to keep I have"
With mingled fear and shame;
How anxiously I watched, dear Will,
Till I came 'round again!

In my distress I vainly strove
To check the welling tears
"The precious blood poured freely forth
And conquered all my fears."

But that was many years ago,
And I've no doubt that you
Remember still the rainy night
In Deacon Foster's pew!
But oh! my first "experience"
Will ne'er forgotten be,
"While down the stream of life we glide
To our eternity."

I'm married now, the gudeman thinks
In me he has a prize;
Ah, me! *"Where ignorance is bliss,*
'Tis folly to be wise."
Of you, dear Will, he nothing knows
And so my heart's at rest,
"And not a wave of trouble rolls
Across my peaceful breast."

A WOMAN'S DEATH WOUND

(Anonymous. American. 1895)

IT left upon her tender flesh no trace.
The murderer is safe. As swift as light
The weapon fell, and in the summer night
Did scarce the silent dewy air displace.

'Twas but a word. A blow had been less base,
Like dumb beast branded by an iron white
With heat. She turned in blind and helpless flight,
But then remembered, and with piteous face,
Came back.

Since then, the world has nothing missed
In her in voice, or smile; but she—each day
She counts until her dying be complete.
One moan she makes and ever—doth repeat,
Oh, lips which I had loved and kissed and kissed,
Did I deserve to die this bitterest way?

THE LADIES

(By Rudyard Kipling)

I'VE taken my fun where I've found it;
I've rogued an' I've ranged in my time;
I've 'ad my pickin' o' sweethearts,
An' four o' the lot was prime.
One was an 'arf-caste widow,
One was a woman at Prome,
One was the wife of a jemadar-sais,
An' one is a girl at 'ome.

Now I aren't no 'and with the ladies,
For, takin' 'em all along,
You never can say till you've tried 'em,
An' then you are like to be wrong.
There's times when you'll think that you mightn't,
There's times when you'll know that you might;
But the things you will learn from the Yellow and Brown,
They'll 'elp you a lot with the White!

I was a young un at 'Oogli,
Shy as a girl to begin;
Aggie de Castrer she made me,
An' Aggie was clever as sin;
Older than me, but my first un—
More like a mother she were—
Showed me the way to promotion an' pay,
An' I learned about women from 'er!

Then I was ordered to Burma,
Actin' in charge o' Bazar,
An' I bot me a tiddy live 'eathen
Through buyin' supplies off 'er pa.
Funny an' yellow an' faithful—
Doll in a teacup she were,
But we lived on the square, like a true-married pair,
An' I learned about women from 'er!

Then we was shifted to Neemuch
(Or I might ha' been keepin' 'er now),
An' I took with a shiny she-devil,
The wife of a nigger at Mhow;
'Taught me the gipsy-folks bolee;
Kind o' volcano she were,
For she knifed me one night 'cause I wished she was white,
And I learned about women from 'er!

Then I come 'ome in a trooper,
'Long of a kid o' sixteen—
'Girl from a convent at Meerut,
The straightest I ever 'ave seen.
Love at first sight was 'er trouble,
She didn't know what it were;
An' I wouldn't do such, 'cause I liked 'er too much,
But—I learned about women from 'er!

I've taken my fun where I've found it,
An' now I must pay for my fun,
For the more you 'ave known o' the others
The less will you settle to one;
An' the end of it's sittin' and thinkin',
An' dreamin' Hell-fires to see;
So be warned by my lot (which I know you will not),
An' learn about women from me!

What did the Colonel's Lady think?
Nobody never knew.
Somebody asked the Sergeant's Wife,
An' she told 'em true!
When you get to a man in the case,
They're like as a row of pins—
For the Colonel's Lady an' Judy O'Grady
Are sisters under their skins!

"MARY, PITY WOMEN!"

(By Rudyard Kipling)

YOU call yourself a man,
For all you used to swear,
An' leave me, as you can,
My certain shame to bear?
I 'ear! You do not care—
You done the worst you know.
I 'ate you, grinnin' there. . . .
Ah, Gawd, I love you so!

Nice while it lasted, an' now it is over—
Tear out your 'eart an' good-bye to your lover!
What's the use o' grievin', when the mother that bore you
(Mary, pity women!) knew it all before you?

It aren't no false alarm,
  The finish to your fun;
You—you 'ave brung th' 'arm,
  An' I'm the ruined one;
  An' now you'll off an' run
With some new fool in tow.
  Your 'eart? You 'aven't none. . . .
Ah, Gawd, I love you so!

When a man is tired there is naught will bind 'im;
All 'e solemn promised 'e will shove be'ind 'im.
What's the good o' prayin' for the Wrath to strike 'im
(Mary, pity women!) when the rest are like 'em?

What 'ope for me or—it?
  What's left for us to do?
I've walked with men a bit,
  But this—but this is you.
  So 'elp me Christ, it's true!
Where can I 'ide or go?
  You coward through and through! . . .
Ah, Gawd, I love you so!

All the more you give 'em the less are they for givin'—
Loves lies dead, an' you can not kiss 'im livin'.
Down the road 'e led you there is no returnin'
(Mary, pity women!) but you're late in learnin'!

You'd like to treat me fair?
  You can't, because we're pore?
We'd starve? What do I care!
  We might, but this is shore!
  I want the name—no more—
The name, an' lines to show,
  An' not to be an 'ore. . . .
Ah, Gawd, I love you so!

What's the good o' pleadin', when the mother that bore you
(Mary, pity women!) knew it all before you?
Sleep on 'is promises an' wake to your sorrow
(Mary, pity women!) for we sail to-morrow!

A DEAD WOMAN

(By Vance Thompson. 1899)

I.

OPEN swing the doors; the torches
Bicker in the windy night—
Cast strange shadows in the porches,
Down dim alleys in the night.

Come away now—dust and ashes—
Dust to dust and clay to clay—
Stormily the organ crashes—
Dust and ashes—come away.

High the wind snarls and the torches,
Flaring down the blackening night,
Toss grim shadows in the porches
And dim alleys in the night.

II.

Men looked at you; saw the woman,
Just the eyes and limbs and common
Charm—odor di femmina—that
Draws us all. And only saw that.
One man cared not much for seeming—
Animal red lips and dreaming,
Helpless eyes; great limbs; the value
Of the flesh you wore to pall you,
All that palpitant, sweet vesture—
Caring not for these, he pressed your
Body in the rack, to tear it
Open, till he saw the spirit,
Soul of you, its shame or merit.

First he took your body, woman,
Stained it, smirched it, made it common,
Scarred it with stange loves, flagitious.
Gored it raw with lust; set vicious
Things to heat the eyes; lubricious,
Unclean things to smirk and chatter
In the ears lewd, Paphian matter.

So he made you foul; and eager
Then to see how fared the meagre,
Warped, black, ulcered soul, he started
The great rack wheels. Snapped and parted

All the strings of the flesh raiment
He had fouled. The man for payment
Saw white wings flash as your soul went,
White, white, white, to God's enrollment.

III.

They buried you to-night.
He saw the yellow torches blown alight,
Heard the organ's thunder.
  He went away into the confused night,
Full of wonder.

A MIDNIGHT LUNCH

(Anonymous. American. C, 1900)

WOULD you like a little Supper with covers laid for two
  (You know the kind of Supper that I mean;)
And if you are not hungry you can look the Menu through
  —You know the kind of Hunger that I mean.
We'll have a little Duck, celery salad on the side,
A little Bottle, cold as ice, in which we may confide
All thoughts of the Hereafter, and Other Things, beside.
  —You know the kind of Other Things I mean.

When we've had that little Supper with covers laid for two
  (You know the kind of Supper that I mean),
The Dessert will follow, as Desserts always do
  —You know the kind of Dessert that I mean.
We'll have a little Fruit, a little Coffee on the side,
Then another little Bottle which doubtless will decide
If you are to go home early—and Other Things, beside.
  —You know the kind of Other Things I mean.

Yes, I'd like that little Supper with covers laid for two,
  And I know the kind of Supper that you mean.
And I'll come to you quite Hungry and I'll go the Menu through,
  And I know the kind of Hunger that you mean.
And I will not go Home early, for 'tis mean to eat and run:
Your Bill of Fare's a dandy and your Dessert is number one;
And we'll have the extra Bottle and Other Things, for fun;
And I know the kind of Other Things you mean.

THE ALTAR OF ARTEMIS

(By Aleister Crowley. From *The Soul of Osiris.* 1901)

WHERE, in the coppice, oak and pine
And mystic yew and elm are found,
Sweeping the skies, that grow divine
With the dark wind's despairing sound,
The wind that roars from the profound,
And smites the mountain-tops, and calls
Mute spirits to black festivals,
And feasts in valleys iron-bound,
Desolate crags, and barren ground;—
There in the strong storm-shaken grove
Swings the pale censer-fire for love.

The foursquare altar, rightly hewn,
And overlaid with beaten gold,
Stands in the gloom; the stealthy tune
Of singing maidens overbold
Desires mad mysteries untold,
With strange eyes kindling, as the fleet
Implacable untiring feet
Weave mystic figures manifold
That draw down angels to behold
The moving music, and the fire
Of their intolerable desire.

For, maddening to fiercer thought,
The fiery limbs requicken, wheel
In formless furies, subtly wrought
Of swifter melodies than steel
That flashes in the fight: the peal
Of amorous laughters choking sense,
And madness kissing violence,
Ring like dead horsemen; bodies reel
Drunken with motion; spirits feel
The strange constraint of gods that clip
From Heaven to mingle lip and lip.

The gods descend to dance; the noise
Of hungry kissings, as a swoon,
Faints for excess of its own joys,
And mystic beams assail the moon,
With flames of their infernal noon;
While the smooth incense, without breath,

Spreads like some scented flower of death,
  Over the grove; the lovers' boon
  Of sleep shall steal upon them soon,
And lovers' lips, from lips withdrawn,
Seek dimmer bosoms till the dawn.

Yet on the central altar lies
  The sacrament of kneaded bread,
With blood made one, the sacrifice
  To those, the living, who are dead—
  Strange gods and goddesses, that shed
Monstrous desires of secret things
Upon their worshippers, from wings
  One lucent web of light, from head
  One labyrinthine passion-fed
Palace of love, from breathing rife
With secrets of forbidden life.

But not the sunlight, nor the stars,
  Nor any light but theirs alone,
Nor iron masteries of Mars,
  Nor Saturn's misconceiving zone,
  Nor any planet's may be shown,
Within the circle of the grove,
Where burn the sanctities of love:
  Nor may the foot of man be known,
  Nor evil eyes of mothers thrown
On maidens that desire the kiss
Only of maiden Artemis.

But horned and huntress from the skies,
  She bends her lips upon the breeze,
And pure and perfect in her eyes,
  Burn magical virginity's
  Sweet intermittent sorceries.
When the slow wind from her sweet word
In all their conchéd ears is heard.
  And like the slumber of the seas,
  There murmur through the holy trees
The kisses of the goddess keen,
And sighs and laughters caught between.

For, swooning at the fervid lips
  Of Artemis, the maiden kisses
Sob, and the languid body slips
  Down to enamelled wildernesses.
  Fallen and loose the shaken tresses;
Fallen the sandal and girdling gold,

Fallen the music manifold
  Of moving limbs and strange caresses,
  And deadly passion that possesses
The magic ecstasy of these
Mad maidens, tender as blue seas.

Night spreads her yearning pinions,
  The baffled day sinks blind to sleep;
The evening breeze outswoons the sun's
  Dead kisses to the swooning deep.
  Upsoars the moon; the flashing steep
Of Heaven is fragrant for her feet;
The perfume of the grove is sweet
  As slumbering women furtive creep
  To bosoms where small kisses weep,
And find in fervent dreams the kiss
Most memoried of Artemis.

Impenetrable pleasure dies
  Beneath the madness of new dreams;
The slow sweet breath is turned to sighs
  More musical than many streams
  Under the moving silver beams,
Fretted with stars, thrice woven across.
White limbs in amorous slumber toss,
  Like sleeping foam, whose silver gleams
  On motionless dark seas; it seems
As if some gentle spirit stirred.
Their lazy brows with some swift word.

So, in the secret of the shrine,
  Night keeps them nestled, so the gloom
Laps them in waves as smooth as wine,
  As glowing as the fiery womb
  Of some young tigress, dark as doom,
And swift as sunrise. Love's content
Builds its own monument,
  And carves above its vaulted tomb
  The Phoenix on her fiery plume,
To their own souls to testify
Their kisses' immortality.

LOT

(By Aleister Crowley. From *The Soul of Osiris.* 1901)

TURN back from safety, in my love abide,
Whose lips are warm as when, a virgin bride
I clung to thee ashamed and very glad,
Whose breasts are lordlier for the pain they had,
Whose arms cleave closer than thy spouse's own!
Thy spouse—O lover, kiss me, and atone!
All my veins burst for love, my ripe breasts beat
And lay their bleeding blossoms at thy feet!
Spurn me no more! O bid these strangers go;
Turn to my lips till their cup overflow;
Hurt me with kisses, kill me with desire,
Consume me and destroy me with the fire
Of blasting passion straining at the heart,
Touched to the core by sweetnesses, that smart
Bitten by fiery snakes, whose poisonous breath
Swoons in the midnight, and dissolves to death!

* * * * * *

Turn to me, touch me, mix thy very breath
With mine to mingle floods of fiery dew
With flames of purple, like the sea shot through
With golden glances of a fiercer star.
Turn to me, bend above me; you may char
These olive shoulders with an old-time kiss,
And fix thy mouth upon me for such bliss
Of sudden rage rekindled. Turn again,
And make delight the minister of pain,
And pain the father of a new delight,
And light a lamp of torture for the night
Too grievous to be borne without a cry
To rend the very bowels of the sky
And make the archangel gasp—a sudden pang,
Most like a traveller stricken by the fang
Of the black adder whose squat head springs up,
A flash of death, beneath a cactus cup.
Ah turn, my bosom for thy love is cold;
My arms are empty, and my lips can hold
No converse with thee far away like this.
O for that communing pregnant with a kiss
That is reborn when lips are set together
To link our souls in one desirous tether,
And weld our very bodies into one.
Ah fiend Jehovah, what then have we done

To earn thy curse? Is love like ours too strong
To dwell before thee, and do thy throne no wrong?
Art thou grown jealous of the fiery band?
Lo! thou hast spoken, and thy strong command
Bade earth and air divide, and on the sea
Thy spirit moved—and thou must envy me!

* * * * * *

Our love must lie beneath thy bitter ban!
Thou petty, envious God! My King, be sure
His brute force shall not to the end endure;
Some stronger soul than thine shall wrest his crown
And thrust him from his own high heaven down
To some obscure forgetful hell. For me
Forsake thy hopes in him. We worship, we,
Rather the dear delights we know and hold;
The first cool kiss, within the water cold
That draws its music from some bubbling well,
Looks long, looks deadly, looks desirable,
The touch that fires, the next kiss, and the whole
Body embracing, symbol of the soul,
And all the perfect passion of an hour.
Turn to me, pluck that amaranthine flower,
And leave the doubtful blossoms of the sky!
You dare not kiss me! dare not draw you nigh
Lest I should lure you to remain! nor speak
Lest you should catch the blood within your cheek
Mantling. You dared enough—so long ago!—
When to my blossom body clean as snow
You pressed your bosom till desire was pain,
And—then—that midnight! you did dare remain
Though all my limbs were bloody with your mouth
That tore their flesh to satiate its drouth,
That was not thereby satisfied! And now
A pallid coward, with sly, skulking brow,
You must leave Sodom for your spouse's sake.
Coward and coward and coward; who would take
The best flower of my life and leave me so,
Still loving you—Ah! weak—and turn to go
For fear of such a God! O blind! O fool!
To heed these strangers and to be the tool
Of their smooth lies and monstrous miracles.
O break this bondage and cast off their spells!
Five righteous! Thou a righteous man! A jest!
A righteous man—you always loved me best,
And even when lured by lips of wanton girls
Would turn away and sigh and touch my curls,

And slip half-conscious to the old embrace.
And now you will not let me see your face
Or hear your voice or touch you. Ah! the hour!
He moves. Come back, come back, my life's one flower!
Come back. One kiss before you leave me. So!
Stop—turn—one little kiss before you go;
It is my right—you must. Oh no! Oh no!

A SAINT'S DAMNATION

(By Aleister Crowley. From *The Soul of Osiris.* 1901)

YOU buy my spirit with those shameless eyes
That burn my soul, you loose the torrent stream
Of my desire, you make my lips your prize,

And on them burns the whole life's hope: you deem
You buy a heart; but I am well aware
How my damnation dwells in that supreme

Passion to feed upon your shoulders bare,
And pass the dewy twilight of our sin
In the intolerable flames of hair

That clothe my body from your head; you win
The devil's bargain; I am yours to kill,
Yours, for one kiss; my spirit for your skin!

O bitter love, consuming all my will!
O love destroying, that hast drained my life
Of all those fountains of dear blood that fill

My heart! O woman, would I call you wife?
Would I content you with one touch divine
To flood your spirit with the clinging strife

Of perfect passionate joy, the joy of wine,
The drunkenness of extreme pleasure, filled
From sin's amazing cup. Oh, mine, mine, mine,

Mine, if your kisses maddened me or killed,
Mine, at the price of my damnation deep,
Mine, if you will, as once your glances willed!

Take me, or break me, slay or soothe to sleep,
If only yours one hour, one perfect hour,
Remembrance and despair and hope to steep.

In the infernal potion of that flower,
  My poisonous passion for your blood! Behold!
How utterly I yield, how gladly dower

Our sin with my own spirit's quenched gold,
  Clothe love with my own soul's immortal power,
Give thee my body as a fire to hold—
  O love, no words, no songs—your breast my bower!

NON SUM QUALIS ERAM BONAE SUB REGNO CYNARAE

(By Ernest Dowson. From *Poems*. 1905)

LAST night, ah yesternight, betwixt her lips and mine
  There fell thy shadow, Cynara! thy breath was shed
Upon my soul between the kisses and the wine;
And I was desolate and sick of an old passion,
  Yea, I was desolate and bowed my head:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

All night upon mine heart I felt her warm heart beat,
Night-long within mine arms in love and sleep she lay;
Surely the kisses of her bought red mouth were sweet;
But I was desolate and sick of an old passion,
  When I awoke and found the dawn was gray:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

I have forgot much, Cynara! gone with the wind,
Flung roses, roses riotously with the throng,
Dancing, to put thy pale, lost lilies out of mind;
But I was desolate and sick of an old passion,
  Yea, all the time, because the dance was long:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

I cried for madder music and for stronger wine,
But when the feast is finished and the lamps expire,
Then falls thy shadow, Cynara! the night is thine;
And I am desolate and sick of an old passion,
  Yea, hungry for the lips of my desire:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

APRIL

(By Edward Carpenter. From *Towards Democracy*)

O APRIL, month of Nymphs and Fauns and Cupids,
Month of the Sungod's kisses, Earth's sweet passion,
Of fanciful winds and showers;
Apollo, glorious over hill and dale
Ethereally striding; grasses springing
Rapt to his feet, buds bursting, flowers out-breathing
Their liberated hearts in love to him.

(The litle black-cap garrulous on the willow
Perching so prim, the crested chaffinch warbling,
And primrose and celandine, anemone and daisy,
Starring the tender herb which lambs already nibble.)

Month of all-gathering warmth,
Of breathless moments, hotter and hotter growing—
Smiles turned to fire, kisses to fierce earnest—
Of sultry swoons, pauses, and strange suspense
(Clouds and daemonic thunder through the blue vault threatingly rolling);
Then the delirious up-break—the great fountains of the deep, in Sex,
Loosened to pouring failing rushing waters;
Shafts of wild light; and Sky and Earth in one another's arms
Melted, and all of Heaven spent in streams of love
Towards the Loved one.

THE OCEAN OF SEX

(By Edward Carpenter. 1905)

TO hold in continence the great sea, the great ocean of Sex, within one,
With flux and reflux pressing on the bounds of the body, the beloved genitals,
Vibrating, swaying emotional to the star-glint of the eyes of all human beings,
Reflecting Heaven and all Creatures,
How wonderful!

Scarcely a figure, male or female, approaches, but a tremor travels across it.
As when on the cliff which bounds the edge of a pond someone moves, then in the bowels of the water also there is a mirrored movement,
So on the edge of this Ocean.
The glory of the human form, even faintly outlined under the trees or by the shore, convulses it with far reminiscences;
(Yet strong and solid the sea-banks, not lightly to be overpassed;)
Till may-be to the touch, to the approach; to the incantation of the eyes of one,
It burst forth, uncontrollable.

O wonderful Ocean of Sex,
Ocean of millions and millions of tiny seed-like human forms contained (if they be truly contained) within each person,
Mirror of the very universe,
Sacred temple and innermost shrine of each body,
Ocean-river flowing ever on through the great trunk and branches of Humanity,
From which after all the individual only springs like a leaf-bud;
Ocean which we so wonderfully contain (if indeed we do contain thee), and yet who containest us!
Sometimes when I feel and know thee within, and identify myself with thee,
Do I understand that I also am of the dateless brood of Heaven and Eternity.

LITTLE LESSONS

(Anonymous. From *The Point of View*. (U. S.) 1905)

THE love I bear you, dearest,
Would make the sweetest tale,
We'd sail upon a sea of bliss,
And I would lift the sail.
Our happiness would be sublime,
Surpassing tongue or pen.
You may as well learn things from me,
As to learn from other men.

"Oh! you have touched me—deeply—"
The young thing whispered low.
He pleaded: "Come! oh! come with me."
She could not answer: "No."
She said: "I'll be your pupil."
And softly added then:
"I may as well learn things from you
As to learn from other men."

They dined alone that evening,
And the young man got his wish.
They even broke the unwritten law
Of: "Nevaire before zee feesh."
At half-past-three, next morning,
He staggered home again.
She had taught him tricks he never knew,
That she'd learned from other men.

BOYHOOD

(Anonymous. From *The Point of View*)

WERE you to ask what age of womanhood
Brings most delight, producing most of good,
I should, to quote a phrase much used in rhyme,
"Turn back the leaflets in the Book of Time."
To find the page, whereon, in letters bright,
Is written clear, my first ecstatic night.

I was a boy attuned to passion's strain,
I knew its music and I knew its pain,
I longed for—something—but, I was a boy;
I knew not how to change my pain to joy.

But Heaven has given to earth, in its dire needs,
No sweeter thing than widows, in their weeds,
And in the household, where I ruled supreme,
A widow lived, a sorrowing, throbbing dream.
I was her comfort. Many times, at night,
When I, awakened by some childish fright,
Cried out to her, she took me to her side,
And kissed me till my fears were pacified.
She was my confidant. My childish fears,
My hopes and dreams and all my boyish tears
Found comfort sweet upon that loving breast
Where all perplexities were set at rest.

One night, worn out with tossing to and fro,
In longings vain which boyhood's night must know,
I dared to make pretence of sudden fright,
That I might see that figure, clad in white,
Come stealing to my side to whisper low:
"What makes my precious darling tremble so?"
All ye who cannot sympathize, stop here.
I speak in tenderness and hold most dear
The memory of that sweet transition hour,
When Nature first revealed her wondrous power.
My heart still throbs as I remember when
I joined the ranks of sturdy little men.

I know not now, what courage made me dare,
But, pillowed close, upon her bosom fair,
A truant hand went wandering far astray
And found—that night hath greater charms than day.
As mighty Mars, full statured, in an hour,
From great Athena's helmet, in his power,
Sprang forth full armoured, at the will of Jove,

So I sprang forth, equipped and armed for love.
With new-found strength, I ceased to be afraid
And something wild within would not be stayed.
Disarmed, perhaps, by hungry widowhood.
She could not check me, even if she would
And kisses wild were riotously pressed
On starving lips too long left uncaressed,
And roses red, upon the white flesh burned,
The while she murmured: "Child! where have you learned?"

I knew my madness, but my heart was fire
And all was swept away in my desire.
Her very gown of daintiest, filmiest lace,
Seemed cumbersome to me and out of place;
I reached and tore it, throat to hem, to find—
How cruel Fate has been to those born blind.
For even the moonbeams, stealing through the bars,
Turned back to whisper to the twinkling stars,
And tip-toed out again to realms of space,
But left the memory of her blushing face.
And when, at last, her beating heart stood still,
As though no more subservient to her will,
And when with fluttering breath, she closed her eyes,
I seemed to lose her, in a mist of sighs.
My senses swam as though a bursting star
Had set on fire the cloudland realms afar,

For one brief moment, I was lost in fear
That all I held so passionately dear
Might chide me as she never had before,
And hold me in her clinging arms no more.
I was a boy—unversed in Nature's needs,
Unlearned of a widow's ways, without their weeds.

She was not wanton. Nay! she was a woman.
Whose wakened, passionate heart was truly human.
And just when love was bursting into flower,
The fates, relentless, sent her saddest hour,
And, torn apart, from all she held most dear,
Time's healing touch had dried the falling tear.
She loved me. I could feel her bosom stir
And strive to soothe my turbulent thoughts of her.
But boon companions who have loved for long,
Draw wavering lines betwixt the right and wrong.
And who shall say that love, new-born like this,
Must never know the madness of a kiss!
And who shall say it was her duty clear
To let me find a different atmosphere
In which to learn the mysteries of the world,
Where unclad sin, in wicked eddies whirled!
I must not whisper, in a careless way,
The thoughts that came to me at dawn of day.
And yet—when asked what age of womanhood
Brings most delight, producing most of good,
I turn to widowhood with tender touch,
And say: "Stop her, for widows know so much."

THOU ART A FLOWER

(Anonymous. From *The Point of View*)

THOU art a flower, dear heart, a fragrant flower
And I, the wandering, hair-clad, amorous bee.
'Mongst all the regal beauties of the bower,
I seek but thee.

I feel the ivory of thy petals fair
Brush lightly on my belly as I woo
And I would sting thee, if I did but dare,
So sweet are you.

I suck the honey from your dewy bowl
And drunken mad, with wild, delirious bliss,
Within your cup, I yield to you my soul
And drink your kiss.

Oh! petals sweet, close in and crush me dead.
I am consumed in flames of passion's fire.
What else is left, when this dear hour hath fled.
But dead desire?

The juice of poppy flowers and breath of rose,
Wistaria's purple, blood-flecked lilies white,
I pilfer and when, soft, your petals close,
When comes the night.

I pour the passions of the world of flowers
Deep in beyond the lips of quivering red.
Your life is mine to craze the trembling hours,
All else is dead.

AFTERMATH

(Anonymous. From *The Point of View*)

LAST night, we fled, close locked, in sweet embrace,
Across the empty kingdom, men call: "Space."
So deep the solitude, I could but feel
Your fear within. It made my senses reel.
I clasped you closer, with encircling arm,
As though to shield you from impending harm
And like a zephyr, from the sun-kissed South,
I felt the pressure of your trembling mouth.

A flame shot through my soul, in that first kiss.
I was on fire. I knew no thought but this;
I loved you—mind, heart, body, brain and soul.
And had—since centuries first began to roll.
And when your melting mouth had answered mine,
Within your eyes, a new-born light divine
Proclaimed the wondrous miracle was done,
And our two souls had melted into one.
Oh! idiot Earth, to waste the dew of youth,
Along the borderlands of perfect truth!
Oh! dolts and dullards, with your feet of clay!
To shun the glorious light of perfect day!
In that first kiss, the past was all laid bare.
The future years, transparent as the air
In swift procession, swept across our path
And left me drunk, with love's sweet aftermath.

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD

(Anonymous. From *The Point of View*)

TO have and to hold and to kiss you,
'Til your eyelids softly close,
To strain to your side and to miss you,
When again the daylight glows
Is better far than to meet you,
And clasping hand to hand.
While others, calmly greet you,—
They do not understand.

I could wish to seek you, only
When you feel a hungry need—
When the hours of night are lonely
And the longing heart-strings bleed.
I would wish to hold you near me,
To bless you and call you fair,
'Til your senses ceased to fear me
And you—not I—would dare.

I could wish to read your dreaming
And always read aright,
'Til the clouds and doubts of seeming,
In a hurried host, took flight.
I could wish to ask no question,
But to know, each day and hour,
Each subtle, sweet suggestion;
Each bud that bursts to flower.

I could wish to bring you, ever,
The Heaven-born gift of choice,
I could wish to jar you, never,
With thoughts I dare not voice.
And yet—I could wish to hold you
In a long, wild, mad embrace,
'Til the tale of love was told you,
With the love-light on your face.

I could love you in storm and lightning,
Your heart athrill with fear,
Your wet limbs round me tight'ning,
And oh! so near! so near!
I could love you in the morning,
When the sun climbs up the sky,
Or, the stars of midnight scorning,
Within your round arms—die.

For the depth and breadth of passion,
  Is to love with a royal will;
Who loveth in idle fashion,
  The cup of joy will spill.
Then come, if you so must will it,
  Away to the realms of space,
And feed the fire of my desire,
  With the glory in your face.

THE FALL OF MAN

(Anonymous. From *The Point of View*)

A HAND omnipotent, in endless space,
From chaos, formed a world and found a place,
Where, through the countless ages, yet unborn,
A star might shine from dusk to rosy morn.
Great mountains rose, majestic in their might,
And sun-kissed hills, aglow with mellow light,
And rippling streams went purling through the dales,
To silver lakes that glistened in the vales.
A subtle fragrance filled each shifting breeze,
The scent of flowers in bloom and budding trees.

So beautiful the earth, in Nature's eyes,
A soul was sent to dwell, in human guise,
A form of god-like beauty and of might.
To drink the sunshine and to dream at night,
Strange visions came to Nature's first child, Man.
In those old days, when first the world began,
Unclad and lone, he roved from spot to spot
And longed and yearned for something which was not.
Until, at last, a prayer went up to Heaven
And Nature's noblest gift to man was given:
A gentle, throbbing, trembling, beauteous maid,
Fair as the man, but with a softer shade,
Endowed with beauty and a thousand charms
That sought the sheltering clasp of loving arms.

As children play, in childhood's happy hours,
They romped and played among the sylvan bowers,
Or sported in the streams whose waters sweet
Ran cool beneath the trees at noonday's heat.
And when night's sable banners were unfurled
And darkness wound her arms about the world,

On beds of roses, in some vine-clad nest,
Their drowsy senses found untroubled rest
And wandering zephyrs swept across them there,
Unclad, but unashamed, in Eden fair.

No thought had come to them of wild desire
And yet, at times, a smouldering, hidden fire
Seemed slumbering deep within and fiercer burned,
When, in their sleep, they toward each other turned,
One ambient night of blissful summer-time,
A perfect night of Eden's balmy clime,
Eve stretched her languorous limbs in restless sleep
And Adam, at her side, sought slumber deep.
Some trifling thing, perhaps a wind-swayed fern,
A leaf—a bird—caused both of them to turn.
Eve's rounded arm was thrown above her head,
Her dimpled knee, just lifted from its bed,
When, by this chance, this trifle, light as air,
Their warm lips met, and, trembling, lingered there.
They slept no more from dusk to rosy dawn,
'Mongst roses red or on some grassy lawn,
But wakened often, from strange dreams of bliss,
To find their mouths all melting in a kiss.
Their hearts were filled with vague, unknown desire,
Nor knew they how to quench the wondrous fire.

A wild unrest upon them settled down
And Adam's brow would often wear a frown,
And then again, he'd stroke her glorious hair
And gaze into her eyes and call her fair,
Then clasp her fiercely, with encircling arm,
As though to shield her from impending harm,
Then wildly kiss her—eyes—mouth—neck and breast,
While she against him, tightly, closely press't.
Still waited, hungered, starved for something more.
Yet little knew what nature had in store.

Just how the fall occurred, so long ago,
The modern world should naturally know.
Not touching on his grievous fall from grace,
But just a hint at what we know took place,
And if his fall was premature, what then!
That sometimes happens to the best of men.

Eve's little, truant, tapering fingers slim,
Beloved of Adam and caressed by him,
By accident, one night, grew wondrous wise,
And found just where the trees of knowledge rise.

Amazed, surprise, confounded, if you please,
But, womanlike, inclined a bit to tease,
She tried experiments of many a kind,
To learn by which she most delight could find?
And Adam, dizzy with her new-found charms,
Gave way to every preassure of her arms
And gave her childish innocence full sway,
Nor cared to check her or to say her: "Nay."
Then suddenly, with savage, passionate clasp,
She drew him to her with an eager grasp
And sank exhausted, yet with cheeks aflame,
Athrill with feelings which she could not name
And Adam, swept away, on seas of bliss,
Poured all his soul in one, long, clinging kiss.
'T was pain, 't was pleasure, 't was a joy intense.
It seemed as though along each quivering sense,
Swift rivulets of fire had found their way
And burned their hearts. They knew not night nor day,
Nor life, nor death, nor aught that mortals know.
They only knew they loved each other so.

Nor dreamed they, even yet, of further joy,
The one swift dream that comes without alloy,
And blends two loving natures into one,
Too sweet to last—that ends ere 'tis begun.
It came to them like lightning from the sky.
Each thought the very hour of death was nigh,
Yet longed to live. Delirious pain
Went sweeping through their inmost souls again
And black oblivion brooded for an hour,
O'er passion's birth in Eden's rosy bower.

And when, at last, Eve wakened from her swoon,
The night had fled. The glare of Eden's noon
Sent showers of golden light through waving trees,
And subtle fragrance lingered on the breeze.
Throughout the realm of Eden's joyous bower,
All things that lived were happy in that hour,
For, led by sweet desire, example given,
They found, on earth, the one foretaste of Heaven.

And since you must know all there is to know,
When Eve awakened, in a blushing glow,
Her thirst for knowledge, seeking to know all,
Discovered first the secret of the fall.
She sought the source of her new-found delight.
Turned pale, grew faint and trembled at the sight.

The Tree of Knowledge stood—ah! yes, it stood.
Past tense, you see—and while the past was good,
The present need was great, without a doubt
And pretty Eve began to fret and pout.
She wept and sighed and said "I see it all,
For here was death and there, alas! the fall."

THE MERRY LITTLE MAID AND WICKED LITTLE MONK

(Anonymous. From *The Point of View*)

GOOD father, I have sent for you because
I would not tamper with thy holy laws,
And yet, I know that something is amiss,
For when I see the youths and maidens kiss,
I tremble and my very knees grow weak
Until my chamber I am forced to seek
And there, with cheeks aflame, in floods of tears,
I toss with strangely mingled hopes and fears.

And, father, strange to say, throughout the night,
Although my figure, as you see, is slight,
I dream I have a ripe, voluptuous form,
And strong arms, 'round me, hold me close and warm,
Until at last, at last, I blush to say,
My very garments seem to melt away,
Until, as nature clad me, there I stand,
The willing victim to a wandering hand.

And at these times, when I seem not alone,
The form that holds me is not like my own.
It has not swelling globes, here, such as these,
No sloping thighs nor rounded, dimpled knees,
And stranger still—pray, father, dear, draw near,
The greatest difference seems to be—just—here.

Dear father, should I pray and fast, in pain?
Or sleep and dream those blissful dreams again?
It seems not sin and yet my mirror shows
A face where shame and deepest color glows.
Tell me, it is not wicked, father, dear.
To find myself with new sensations, here.
Ah! heaven! you burn, with fever too, it seems.
Are you, as well, a prey to fitful dreams?

And once I dreamed far more than I have told.
This handsome stranger once was overbold,
And I will show thee, father, if I may,
Just what was done. I could not but obey.
The sun had set. The stars were in the sky,
And I was trembling, though I knew not why
And here upon this couch, I lay, like this,
When on my lips I felt a burning kiss.

Yes! that is like it! Just the very same!!!
My arms reached upward. I was not to blame.
For all my soul seemed hungering to feel
The strange delight that made my senses reel.
It seemed so strange that pleasure should be pain
And yet I fain would suffer, once again.

'T was thus—and so—and ever did I strain
To meet, half way, the source of all my pain.
My voice came, fitful—broken—just as now—
I was not mistress of myself, I vow!
I clasped the spirit visitor like this—
Through all my veins, I felt his maddening kiss.
My pulse went wild—I knew not what was done—
And—goodness gracious! * * * * *
* * * * * How that man can run!

THE LAMENT OF YASMINI, THE DANCING-GIRL [1]

(By Laurence Hope. From *Last Poems.* 1905)

AH, what hast thou done with that Lover of mine?
The Lover who only cared for thee?
Mine for a handful of nights, and thine
For the Nights that Are and the Days to Be,
The scent of the Champa lost its sweet—
So sweet it was in the Times that Were!—
Since His alone, of the numerous feet
That climb my steps, have returned not there.
Ahi, Yasmini, return not there!

Art thou yet athrill at the touch of His hand,
Art thou still athirst for His waving hair?
Nay, passion thou never couldst understand,

[1] All poems by Laurence Hope are copyrighted by John Lane Company, New York.

Life's heights and depths thou wouldst never dare.
The great Things left thee untouched, unmoved,
The Lesser Things had thy constant care.
Ah, what hast thou done with the Lover I loved,
Who found me wanting, and thee so fair?
Ahi, Yasmini, He found her fair!

Nay, nay, the greatest of all was thine;
The love of the One whom I craved for so,
But such I doubt if thou couldst divine
The Grace and Glory of Love, or know
The worth of the One whom thine arms embraced,
I may misjudge thee, but who can tell?
So hard it is, for the one displaced,
To weigh the worth of a rival's spell.
Ahi, Yasmini, thy rival's spell!

And Thou, whom I loved: have the seasons brought
That fair content, which allured Thee so?
Is it all that Thy delicate fancy wrought?
Yasmini wonders; she may not know.
Yet never the Stars desert the sky,
To fade away in the desolate Dawn,
But Yasmini watches their glory die,
And mourns for her own Bright Star withdrawn,
Ahi, Yasmini, the lonely dawn!

Ah, never the lingering gold dies down
In a sunset flare of resplendent light,
And never the palm-tree's feathery crown
Uprears itself to the shadowy night,
But Yasmini thinks of those evenings past,
When she prayed the glow of the glimmering West
To vanish quickly, that night, at last,
Might bring Thee back to her waiting breast,
Ahi, Yasmini, how sweet that rest!

Yet I would not say that I always weep;
The force, that made such a desperate thing
Of my love for Thee, has not fallen asleep;
The blood still leaps, and the senses sing,
While other passion has oft availed.
(Other Love—Ah, my One, forgive!—)
To aid, when Churus and Opium failed;—
I could not suffer so much and live.
Ahi, Yasmini, who had to live?

Nay, why should I say "Forgive" to Thee?
To whom my lovers and I are naught,

Who granted some passionate nights to me
  Then rose and left me with never a thought!
And yet, Ah, yet, for those Nights that Were,
  Thy passive limbs and thy loose loved hair,
I would pay, as I have paid, all these days,
  With the love that kills and the thought that slays.
    Ahi, Yasmini, thy youth it slays!

The youthful widow, with shaven hair,
  Whose senses ache for the love of a man,
The young Priest, knowing that women are fair,
  Who stems his longing as best he can,
These suffer not as I suffer for Thee;
  For the Soul desires what the senses crave,
There will never be pleasure or peace for me,
  Since He who wounded, alone could save.
    Ahi, Yasmini, He will not save!

The torchlight flares, and the lovers lean
  Towards Yasmini, with yearning eyes,
Who dances, wondering what they mean,
  And gives cold kisses, and scant replies.
They talk of Love, she withholds the name,—
  (Love came to her as a Flame of Fire!)
From things that are only a weary shame;
  Trivial Vanity;—light Desire.
    Ahi, Yasmini, the light Desire!

Yasmini bends to the praise of men,
  And looks in the mirror, upon her hand,
To curse the beauty that failed her then—
  Ah, none of her lovers can understand!
How her whole life hung on that beauty's power,
  The spell that waned at the final test,
The charm that paled in the vital hour,—
  Which won so many,—yet lost the best!
    Ahi, Yasmini, who lost the best!

She leaves the dancing to reach the roof,
  With the lover who claims the passing hour,
Her lips are his, but her eyes aloof
  While the starlight falls in a silver shower.
Let him take what pleasure, what love, he may,
  He, too, will suffer e'er life be spent,—
But Yasmini's soul has wandered away
  To join the Lover, who came,—and went!
    Ahi, Yasmini, He came,—and went!

SONG OF RAMESRAM TEMPLE GIRL

(By Laurence Hope. 1905)

NOW is the season of my youth,
Not thus shall I always be.
Listen, dear Lord, thou too art young,
Take thy pleasure with me.
My hair is straight as the falling rain,
And fine as morning mist,
I am a rose awaiting thee
That none have touched or kissed.

Do as thou wilt with mine and me,
Beloved, I only pray,
Follow the promptings of thy youth.
Let there be no delay!

A leaf that flutters upon the bough,
A moment, and it is gone,—
A bubble amid the fountain spray,—
Ah, pause, and think thereon;
For such is youth and its passing bloom
That wait for thee this hour,
If aught in thy heart incline to me
Ah, stoop and pluck thy flower!

Come, my Lord, to the temple shade,
Where cooling fountains play,
If aught in thy heart incline to love
Let there be no delay!

Many shall faint with love of me
And I shall slake their thirst,
But Fate has brought thee hither to-day
That thou shouldst be the first.
Old, so old are the temple-walls,
Love is older than they;
But I am the short-lived temple rose,
Blooming for thee to-day.

Thine am I, Prince, and only thine,
What is there more to say?
If aught in thy heart incline to love
Let there be no delay!

EARLY LOVE

(By Laurence Hope. 1905)

WHO says I wrong thee, my half-opened rose?
Little he knows of thee or me, or love.—
I am so tender of thy fragile youth
Yea, in my hours of wildest ecstasy,
Keeping close-bitted each careering sense.
Only I give mine eyes unmeasured law
To feed them where they will, and their delight
Was curbed at first, until thy tender shame
Died in the bearing of thy first born joy.

I am not cruel, my half-opened rose,
Though in the sunshine of my own desire
I have uncurled thy petals to the light
And fed the tendrils of thy dawning sense
With delicate caresses, till they leave
Thee tremulous with the newness of thy joy,
Sharing thy lover's fire with innocent flame.

Others will wrong thee, that I well foresee,
Being a man, knowing my fellow men,
And they who, knowing, would blame my love of thee
Contentedly will see thy beauty given,
When the world judges thou art ripe to wed,—
To the rough rites of marriage, to the pain
And grievous weariness of child-getting,—
This shall be right and licit in their eyes—
But it would break my heart, were I alive.

Yea, This will be; many will doubtless share
The rose whose bud has been my one delight,
And I shall not be there to shield my flower.
Yet, I have taught thee of the ways of men,
Much I have learnt in cities and in courts,
Winnowed to suit thy tender brain,—is thine,
Thus Life shall find thee, not all unprepared
To face its callous, subtle cruelties.

Still,— it will profit little; I discern
Thou art of those whose love will prove their curse,
—Thou sayest thou lovest me, to thy delight?
Nay, little one, it is not love as yet.
Dear as thou art, and lovely, thou canst not love,
Thy later loves shall show the truth of this.

Ay, by some subtle signs I know full well
That thou are capable of that great love
Whose glory has the light of unknown heavens,
And makes hot Hell for those who harbour it.

Naught I can say could save thee from thyself,
Ah, were I half my age!
Had been too old for thy sweet thirteenth year,
Still, thou art happy now, and glad thine eyes,
When, as the lilac evening gains the sky,
I lay thee, 'Twixt thine own soft hair and me,
Kissing thy senses into soft delight.
Ruffling the petals of my half-closed rose
With tender touches, and perpetual care
That no wild moment of mine own delight
Deep in the flower's heart,—should set the fruit.

Ah, in the days to come, it well may be,
When thou shalt see thy beauty stained and torn
By the harsh sequel of some future love,
Thy thoughts shall stray to thy first lover's grave,
And thou shalt murmur, "Ay, but that was love,
They were most wrong who said he did me wrong.
Only I was too young to understand."

ALL FAREWELLS SHOULD BE GENTLY SPOKEN

(By Laurence Hope. From *Stars of the Desert.* 1903)

AY, smooth your hair for another lover,
Refold the satin, restring the pearls,
Lest those who will take my place discover
Discoloured tints and dishevelled curls.

Lift up those delicate lips that mine
Reddened with kisses but yesterday,
Let others drink the dregs of the wine
We two have tasted and flung away.

I wish you well; go gather the gold,
The little triumphs you hold so dear,
For you the pasture, the sheltered fold;
Ways smoothed by custom and fenced by fear.

You could not have lived aloof, afar
  In golden deserts, by lonely streams,
Be rich, be courted, be all you are,
  But seek not silence, nor love nor dreams.

Yet what am I that my song should shame you,
  What strength have I, that I call you weak?
Ah, Love alone has the right to blame you
  And He is a God and will not speak.

One thing there is yet to be glad of; Fate
  In making us one has not left us three,
No child shall inherit our love's estate
  To be false like you or forlorn like me.

What if your sweet and treacherous eyes
  Had smiled at me from a child of mine
Your delicate lips, so apt at lies,
  Lived and laughed, a perpetual sin.

Of fitful passion and frenzied hours
  That now are utterly passed away,
Dead and forgotten as last year's flowers
  And all sweet things that have had their day.

Yet, last farewells should be gently spoken,
  And times of pleasure let no man grudge.
Of things once loved, though his heart be broken,
  A lover has never the right to judge.

DISLOYAL

(By Laurence Hope. 1903)

YOU were more than a Lover to me,—
  Were something sacred, and half divine,—
Akin to Sunset over the Sea,
  To leaves that tremble and stars that shine.

There was not much to attract in me,
  No gift or beauty; you did not care
Enough to give me fidelity
  Who cared so deeply, and could not share.

Alas, my Temple! I find the Shrine
  I entered barefoot, with bended head,
To pay that tender homage of mine,
  An open courtyard, where all may tread!

And all men knew it, I hear, but I,
  Who being a trusting fool, it seems,
Went to the Market of Love to buy
  With coins of worship, and faith, and dreams!

Still it is over. Now, to forget!
  I know not whether to choose anew
In hopes of finding loyalty yet,
  Or fond but faithless, drift on with you.

Loving you lightly, among the rest,—
  (Many a little, not greatly one),—
You may be right: I may find it best
  To do, henceforward, as you have done.

But ah, for my sweet, lost nights with you,
  When had Death been, in the dawning grey,
Price of your beauty and love, I knew
  I would have paid, and been glad to pay!

SONG OF KHAN ZADA

(By Laurence Hope. From *India's Love Lyrics.* 1902)

AS one may sip a Stranger's Bowl
  You gave yourself but not your soul.
I wonder, now that time has passed,
Where you will come to rest at last.

You gave your beauty for an hour,
I held it gently as a flower.
You wished to leave me, told me so,—
I kissed your feet and let you go.

THE TEAK FOREST

(By Laurence Hope. 1902)

WHETHER I loved you who shall say?
  Whether I drifted down your way
In the endless River of Chance and Change,
And you woke the strange
Unknown longings that have no names,
But burn us all in their hidden flames,
  Who shall say?

Life is a strange and a wayward thing:
We heard the bells of the Temples ring,
The married children, in passing, sing.
The month of marriage, the month of spring,
Was full of the breath of sunburnt flowers
That bloom in a fiercer light than ours,
And, under a sky more fircely blue,
I came to you!

You told me tales of your vivid life
Where death was cruel and danger rife—
Of deep dark forests, of poisoned trees,
Of pains and passions that scorch and freeze,
Of southern noontides and eastern nights,
Where love grew frantic with strange delights,
While men were slaying and maidens danced,
Till I, who listened, lay still, entranced.
Then, swift as a swallow heading south,
I kissed your mouth!

One night when the plains were bathed in blood
From sunset light in a crimson flood,
We wandered under the young teak trees
Whose branches whined in the light night breeze;
You led me down to the water's brink,
"The Spring where the Panthers come to drink
At night; there is always water here
Be the season never so parched and sere."
Have we no souls of beasts in the forms of men?
I fain would have tasted your life-blood then.

The night fell swiftly; this sudden land
Can never lend us a twilight strand
'Twixt the daylight shore and the ocean night,
But takes—as it gives—at once, the light.
We laid us down on the steep hillside,
While far below us wild peacocks dried,
And we sometimes heard, in the sunburnt grass,
The stealthy steps of the Jungle pass.
We listened; knew not whether they went
On love or hunger the more intent.
And under your kisses I hardly knew
Whether I loved or hated you.

But your words were flame and your kisses fire,
And who shall resist a strong desire?
Not I, whose life is a broken boat
On a sea of passions, adrift, afloat.

And, whether I came in love or hate,
That I came to you was written by Fate
In every hue of the blood-red sky,
In every tone of the peacocks' cry.

While every gust of the Jungle night
Was fanning the flame you had set alight.
For these things have power to stir the blood
And compel us all to their own chance mood.
And to love or not we are no more free
Than a ripple to rise and leave the sea.

We are ever and always slaves of these,
Of the suns that scorch and the winds that freeze,
Of the faint sweet scents of the sultry air,
Of the half heard howl from the far off lair.
These chance things master us ever. Compel
To the heights of Heaven, the depths of Hell.

Whether I love you? You do not ask
Nor waste yourself on the thankless task.
I give your kisses at least return,
What matter whether they freeze or burn.
I feel the strength of your fervent arms,
What matter whether it heals or harms.

You are wise; you take what the Gods have sent.
You ask no question, but rest content
So I am with you to take your kiss,
And perhaps I value you more for this.
For this is Wisdom; to love, to live,
To take what Fate, or the Gods, may give,
To ask no question, to make no prayer,
To kiss the lips and caress the hair,
Speed passion's ebb as you greet its flow,—
To have,—to hold,—and,—in time,—let go!

And this is our Wisdom: we rest together
On the great lone hills in the storm-filled weather,
And watch the skies as they pale and burn,
The golden stars in their orbits turn,
While Love is with us, and Time and Peace,
And life has nothing to give but these,
But, whether you love me, who shall say,
Or whether you, drifting down my way
In the great sad River of Chance and Change,
With your looks so weary and words so strange,

Lit my soul from some hidden flame
To a passionate longing without a name,
Who shall say?
Not I, who am but a broken boat,
Content for awhile to drift afloat
In the little noontide of love's delights
Between two Nights.

AFRIDI LOVE

(By Laurence Hope. 1902)

SINCE, oh, Beloved, you are not even faithful
To me, who loved you so, for one short night,
For one brief space of darkness, though my absence
Did but endure until the dawning light:

Since all your beauty—which was mine—you squandered
On that which now lies dead across your door;
See here this knife, made keen and bright to kill you.
You shall not see the sun rise any more.

Lie still! Lie still! In all the empty village
Who is there left to hear or heed your cry?
All are gone down to labour in the valley,
Who will return before your time to die?

No use to struggle; when I found you sleeping,
I took your hands and bound them to your side,
And both these slender feet, too apt at straying,
Down to the cot on which you lie are tied.

Lie still, Beloved; that dead thing lying yonder,
I hated and I killed, but love is sweet,
And you are more than sweet to me, who love you,
Who decked my eyes with dust from off your feet.

Give me your lips; Ah, lovely and disloyal
Give me yourself again; before you go
Down through the darkness of the Great, Blind Portal,
All of life's best and basest you must know.

Erstwhile, Beloved, you were so young and fragile
I held you gently, as one holds a flower:
But now, God knows, what use to still be tender
To one whose life is done within an hour?

I hurt? What then? Death will not hurt you, dearest,
As you hurt me, just for a single night.
You call me cruel, who laid my life in ruins
To gain one little moment of delight.

Look up, look out, across the open doorway
The sunlight streams.. The distant hills are blue.
Look at the pale, pink peach trees in our garden,
Sweet fruit will come of them;—but not for you.

The fair, far snow, upon those jagged mountains
That gnaw against the hard blue Afghan sky
Will soon descend, set free by summer sunshine.
You will not see those torrents sweeping by.

The world is not for you. From this day forward,
You must lie still alone; who would not lie
Alone for one night only, though returning
I was, when earliest dawn should break the sky.

There lies my lute, and many strings are broken,
Some one was playing it, and some one tore
The silken tassels round my Hookah woven;
Some one who plays, and smokes, and loves, no more!

Some one who took last night his fill of pleasure,
As I took mine at dawn! The knife went home
Straight through his heart! God only knows my rapture
Bathing my chill hands in the warm red foam.

And so I pain you? This is only loving,
Wait till I kill you! Ah, this soft, curled hair!
Surely the fault was mine, to Love and leave you
Even a single night, you are so fair.

Cold steel is very cooling to the fervour
Of over passionate ones, Beloved, like you.
Nay, turn your lives to mine. Not quite unlovely
They are as yet, as yet, though quite untrue.

What will your brother say, to-night returning
With laden camels homewards to the hills,
Finding you dead, and me asleep beside you,
Will he wake me first before he kills?

For I shall sleep. Here on the cot beside you
When you, my Heart's Delight, are cold in death.
When your young heart and restless lips are silent,
Grown chilly, even beneath my burning breath.

When I have slowly drawn my knife across you,
Taking my pleasure as I see you swoon,
I shall sleep sound, worn out by love's last fervour,
And then, God grant your kinsmen kill me soon!

SONG BY GULBAZ

(By Laurence Hope. 1902)

IS it safe to lie so lonely when the summer twilight closes
No companion maidens, only you asleep among the roses?

"Thirteen, fourteen years you number, and your hair is soft and scented,
Perilous is such a slumber in the twilight all untented.

"Lonely loveliness means danger, lying in your rose-leaf nest,
What if some young passing stranger broke into your careless rest?"

But she would not heed the warning, lay alone serene and slight,
Till the rosy spears of morning slew the darkness of the night.

Young love, walking softly, found her, in the scented, shady closes,
Threw his ardent arms around her, kissed her lips beneath the roses.

And she said, with smiles and blushes, "Would that I had sooner known!
Never now the morning thrushes wake and find me all alone.

"Since you said the rose-leaf cover sweet protection gave, but slight,
I have found this dear young lover to protect me through the Night!"

LOVE TRIUMPHANT

(By George Sylvester Viereck. From *Nineveh and Other Poems*. 1907)

YOUR body's treasures are mine to-day,
Though bitter as gall be their savour still;
From head to foot shall my kisses play,
Till naught is kept from their sovereign will!

The voice of my need supreme must guide
  My passionate love to its destined goal;
My feverish fingers shall seek and glide
  Until at the last I hold the soul.

My hot strong hands will no veil endure
  That shadows your radiant nakedness;
Lay bare each beauty, conceal no lure,
  Leave naught to hinder my fond caress!

Young blood beats onward, unchecked by shame,
  When passion's harvest is ripe to reap;
For who shall speak with the raging flame,
  Or stay the cataract in its leap?

My armies have stormed at your city's gate—
  I have conquered you, hold you. Might is right
With the beasts of the wild that celebrate
  In the jungle their primal marriage night.

You too are moved by the selfsame power,
  Your quick breath tells in its shuddering fall:
There is naught so strong as love this hour—
  Call it god or beast, it is lord of all!

The god in me and the beast in me
  And all deep things come up to light;
And I would barter my soul to be
  The prize of love for a single night.

One long, long night of supreme desire,
  One long, long night of riot and rage;
For you are the sea and I the fire,
  And old as the world is the war we wage.

The old, old strife of woman and man
  That ever has been, and still shall be
Until the day when the vaulted span
  Shall sink a wreck in the whelming sea.

Once fed, no longer the wolf-pack raves:
  But love can never of madness tire,
And I must drown in your passions waves,
  And you consume in my hot desire.

This the law of the flowering south,
  Of the snow-clad north where the world is white. . . .
You shall faint and fall as I crush your mouth
  Beneath a conqueror's ruthless might!

My life is poured in the stream of yours,
  But fire and flood were not meant to mate:
We shall never be one while the world endures—
  And the meaning of love at the last is hate!

My soul is drunk with your maddening charms;
  You have taken all—I have naught to lose.
About me tighten your slender arms
  With the very grip of the hangman's noose.

So let us struggle, both flame and flood,
  Let love and hate and sense have play
Till the slow dawn rises bathed in blood,
  And you and I are dead ere day!

THE HAUNTED HOUSE

(By George Sylvester Viereck. From *Nineveh and Other Poems.* 1907)

I LAY beside you . . . on your lips the while
  Hovered, most strange . . . the mirage of a smile,
Such as a minstrel lover might have seen
Upon the visage of some antique queen—
Flickering like flame, half choked by wind and dust,
Weary of all things saving song and lust.

How many days and years and lovers' lies
Gave you your knowledge? You are very wise
And tired, yet insatiate to the last.
These things I thought, but said not; and there passed
Before my vision in voluptuous quest,
The pageant of the lovers who possessed
Your soul and body even as I possess,
Who marked your passion in its nakedness
And all your love-sins when your love was new.

They saw as I your quivering breast, and drew
Nearer to the consuming flame that burns
Deep to the marrow of my bone, and turns
My heart to love even as theirs who knew
From head to girdle each sweet curve of you,
Each little way of loving. No caress,
But apes the part of former loves. Ah yes,
Even thus your hand toyed in the locks of him
Who came before me. Was he fair of limb
Or very dark? What matter, with such lures
You snared the hearts of all your paramours!

To-night I feel the presence of the others,
Your lovers were they and are now my brothers
And I have nothing that has not been theirs,
No single bloom the tree of passion bears
They have not plucked. Beloved, can it be?
Is there no gift that you reserve for me—
No loving kindness or no subtle sin,
No secret shrine that none has entered in,
Whither no mocking memories pursue
Love's wistful pilgrim? I am weary too,
With weariness of all your lovers, when
I follow in the ways of other men,
I know each spot of your sweet body is
A cross, the tombstone of some perished kiss.
A touch . . . and an innumerable host
Of shadows rises . . . at each side a ghost.
Withal its beauty and its faultless grace
Your body, dearest, is a haunted place.
When I did yield to passion's swift demand,
One of your lovers touched me with his hand.
And in the pang of amorous delight
I hear strange voices calling through the night.

LETO'S CHILD

(By Maurice Hewlett. From *Artemision.* 1909)

* * * * * * *

THERE between the trees
The prying Fauns and Woodmen dark
And prick-ear'd Satyrs her did mark,
How all abandon'd to her mood
Of careless lovely lassitude—
So ripe, so melting, like a rose
That dewy-hearted throbs and blows
Languorous in the wind's caresses—
She lay becurtained in loose tresses,
Not seeing what her half-dropt zone
Let of her bosom's bower be shown,
Or that soft thing abeating there,
Ungirdled treasure, warm and bare.
And as they peept and spied upon
The goodly sight she made, came One
Adventurous, whom the Woodfolk dreaded,
Great Pan the goat-foot, horny-headed,

And saw her, and began to woo her
With his fierce music to undo her,
And make her former shames go pale
Beside her latter. Here's no tale
For me who walk in Hymnia's beam,
Under her moon-wove eyes adream,
To tell you how Pan workt his will,
Or how she fended, with what skill
Garner'd within that sweeter nest
When she had laid on her Mare's breast,
And one the other comforted.
Little enough that serv'd her stead
This turn! Callisto was too tender
For the chill part: she must surrender.
Like white dawns hung in golden mist
That soon repent their wintry tryst
And go aweeping, she too soon
Gave him his hire, her body's boon;
And, all the kinder for late frost,
Was painful that he nothing lost
By tardy chaffering. So he brought her
To his tree-haunts, and lightly taught her
All of love's mystery; and this maid
For love's sake thought that well betray'd
Which had been life, had she but known it
As afterwards she had to won it.
Ah, passion of the love-denied
That ventures all for't far and wide,
That lacking sweet love falls to foul,
And feeds the flesh and starves the soul!
Her woe was working in her womb
Where that seed lay that was her doom:
Gotten by Pan, by Pan let lie
While he to other game gave eye,
Forgetful of what he had wrought
In the green forest when he taught
Callisto love, and found her apt.

* * * * * * *

THE DARK-EYED GENTLEMAN

(By Thomas Hardy.)

I.

I PITCHED my day's leazings in Crimmercrock Lane,
To tie up my garter and jog on again,
When a dear dark-eyed gentleman passed there and said,

In a way that made all o' me colour rose-red,
"What do I see—
O pretty knee!"
And he came and he tied up my garter for me.

II.

'Twixt sunset and moonrise it was, I can mind:
Ah, 'tis easy to lose what we never more find!—
Of the dear stranger's home, of his name, I knew nought,
But I soon knew his nature and all that it brought.
Then bitterly
Sobbed I that he
Should ever have tied up my garter for me!

III.

Yet now I've beside me a fine lissom lad,
And my slip's nigh forgot, and my days are not sad;
My own dearest joy is he, comrade, and friend,
He it is who safeguards me, on him I depend;
No sorrow brings he,
And thankful I be
That his daddy once tied up my garter for me!

NUPTIAL NIGHT[1]

(By Donald Evans. From *Discords*. 1911)

WE are alone; the marriage-knot is fast;
The door is closed against the world outside.
Nothing now stands between me and my bride,
The fatal, fruitful midnight comes at last.
We grope toward a kiss; escape is past,
But for a moment may we still abide
Possessed of our own souls, and then love's tide
Sweeps us to seaward strangled and aghast.

[1] All poems by Donald Evans are published and copyrighted by Nicholas L. Brown, New York.

RESEMBLANCE

(By Donald Evans. From *Discords*)

ONE dusk thy image for all time I caught,—
Thou stoodst before me whitely garmentless,
Thine eyes were flame and thy arms opened wide,
While thy red mouth made sound deliriously.
Thy tender flesh I gathered to my side
Until thy heart against my heart did press,
And in thy nubile body's mystery
I found the speechless perfect joy I sought!

SONNET ETERNAL

(By Donald Evans. From *Discords*)

IT is not that I love thee any less,
Which holds me back when I might so close be:
Thy lips have opened, calling hungrily,
And thy eyes fill with questioning distress.
I stand away but to once more confess
How my whole soul throbs with its pride in thee,—
Still gaze I at my fortune wonderingly,
For thou art near the stars in perfectness!

O keen clean limbs! O little sweet fleet feet!
O bright white thighs that are love's resting-place!
O singing curves that make thy body's line!
When and where was it first we two did meet?
And how have I deserved of life this grace,
Possession of thy womanhood divine?

INFIDELITIES

(By Donald Evans. 1916)

MY darling, you write me charming letters from your bed,
They caress me, and the darkness covers us,
And your luminous whispers are in my ear,
You call me, and I come to you as I read,
Eager to give you to my hands,
And be lost upon your breast.

But often next day when I re-read a letter I dream,
I wonder, was not your husband, while you wrote it,
In the next room rising from his bath,
And sprinkling rice powder over himself
Making ready to come to you?
Were not perhaps the words you wrote
Your torch to set yourself in flames?
Did not the last Echoes
Of your call to your lover
Help to sweep you not too passively
To accustomed clamorous arms?

LOVING KINDNESS

(By Donald Evans. From *Sonnets from the Patagonia*)

HER flesh was lyrical and sweet to flog,
  For the whip blanched her blood, through every vein
  Flooded with hate shot a hot flow of pain,
And her screams were muffled by a brackish fog.
He loved her, yet his passion could but fret
  Unless he lashed her to an awkward rage—
  But when his hand wrote terror on her page
He knew exultant joy of feigned regret.

Theirs was a bond that poured the wine of fear,
  And he drained her stiffened limbs with cruel art.
He taught her that all tenderness had fled
Till she would beg the hurt to taste the tear,
  And when she bent to kiss her crumpled heart
It lit a chinese candle in his head.

DINNER AT THE HOTEL DE LA TIGRESSE VERTE

(By Donald Evans)

AS they sat sipping their glasses in the courtyard
  Of the Hotel de la Tigresse Verte,
With their silk-swathed ankles softly kissing,
They were certain that they had forever,
Imprisoned fickleness in the vodka—
They knew they had found the ultimate pulse of love.

Story upon story, the dark windows whispered down
To them from above, and over the roof's edge
Danced a grey moon.
The woman pressed her chicken-skin fan against her breast
And through her ran trepidant mutinies of desire
With treacheries of emotion. Her voice vapored:
"In which room shall it be tonight, darling"?
His eyes swept the brood façade, the windows,
Tier upon tier, and his lips were regnant:
"In every room, my beloved!"

THE JEST

(By Robert J. Shores)

NOW tell me a jest," said the snow-haired King,
"Thy wits are a-gathering wool!"
And he bent the fire of his eye in ire
On the face of the motley Fool.
"Nay!" cried the Fool as he bent his knee,
"Never may I smile more,
I have stolen the love of thy lovely Queen!"
And he grovelled on the floor;
"Ho!" cried the King in gladsome glee,
"Ho! ho! What a King of a Fool!" quoth he.

'Mid the gorgeous court sat the snow-haired King
And he boasted of his Fool;
He swore the jest was quite the best
He'd heard in all his rule.
"Ha!" cried the King as he slapped his knee,
"Never have I laughed more—
He has stolen my lovely Queen, has he?"
Meanwhile in the Queen's boudoir—
"Ho!" laughed the Fool in gladsome glee,
"Ho! Ho! What a Fool of a King!" quoth he.

AND DAY COMES ON

(By Ezra Pound. From *Quia Pauper Amavi*)

IN orchard under the hawthorne
She has her lover till morn,
Till the traist man cry out to warn
Them. God how swift the night,
And day comes on.

O Placinatour, that thou end not the night,
Nor take my beloved from my sight,
Nor I, nor tower-man, look on day-light,
'Fore God, How swift the night,
And day comes on.

"Lovely thou art, to hold me close and kisst,
Now cry the birds out, in the meadow mist
Despite the cuckold, do thou as thou list,
So swiftly goes the night
And day comes on.

"My pretty boy, make we our play again,
Here in the orchard where the birds complain,
'Till the traist watcher his song unrein,
Ah God! How swift the night
And day comes on."

"Out of the wind that blows from her,
That dancing and gentle is and pleasanter,
Have I drunk a draught, sweeter than scent of myrrh.
Ah God! How swift the night
And day comes on."

Venust the lady, and none lovelier,
For her great beauty, many men look on her,
Out of my love will her heart not stir,
By God, how swift the night
And day comes on.

Viergier.

ME HAPPY, NIGHT, NIGHT FULL OF BRIGHTNESS

(By Ezra Pound. From *Quia Pauper Amavi*)

ME happy, night, night full of brightness;
On couch made happy by my long delectations;
How many words talked out with abundant candles;
Struggles when the lights were taken away;
Now with bared breasts she wrestled against me,
Tunic spread in delay;
And she then opening my eyelids fallen in sleep,
Her lips upon them; and it was her mouth saying: Sluggard!

In how many varied embraces, our changing arms,
Her kisses, how many, lingering on my lips,
"Turn not Venus into a blinded motion,
  Eyes are the guides of love,
Paris took Helen naked coming from the bed of Menelaus,
Endymion's naked body, bright bait for Diana,
  Such at least is the story.

While our fates twine together, sate we our eyes with love:
For long night comes upon you and a day when no day returns.
Let the Gods lay chains upon us so that no day shall unbind them.
Fool who set a term to love's madness,
For the sun shall drive with black horses, earth shall bring wheat from barley,
The flood shall move toward the fountain
  Ere love know moderations,
  The fish shall swim in dry streams,

No, now while it may be, let not the fruit of life cease.

Dry leaves drop their petals, their stalls are woven in baskets.

Today we take the great breath of lovers, tomorrow fate shuts us in,

Though you will give all your kisses,
You give but a few."

Nor can I shift my pains to other
  Hers will I be dead,
If she confers such nights upon me,
  Long is my life, long in years,

If she give me many,
  God am I for the time.

A LITTLE MAID OF SAPPHO

(By George Sylvester Viereck. From *The Candle and the Flame.* 1912)

O LITTLE siren of the rose-white skin,
  Reared to strange music and to stranger sin,
With scornful lips that move to no man's plea—
O little Maid of Sappho, come to me!
Beneath long lashes downcast eyes and coy,
Yet uninitiate to no secret joy!

O bud burst open ere her day begun,
The virgin and the strumpet blent in one!
Come close to me! Lay your small hand in mine,
And drink the music of my words like wine.
And let me touch your little breasts that swell
With joy remembered where her kisses fell . . .
Ah! she whose wise caressive fingers strike
Your heart-strings and the cithara alike!
By what love-potion is your passion fanned,
What is the magic of that wary hand?
What is the secret of her strange caress,
Fierce, tortured kisses, or the tenderness
That woman gives to woman—flame or snow?
I, too, can kiss or bruise you. You shall know
That love like mine is delicate as hers,
Or madder still, to madder passion stirs,
That shall consume you like some fiery sea—
O little Maid of Sappho, come to me!

Or is it song that sets your blood on fire?
Behold in me no novice to the lyre.
Who is this woman Sappho? I can sing
Like her of Eros. Yea, each voiceless thing,
The very rocks of Mytilene's strand
Shall be made vocal at your sweet command.
Hers but the cooing of the Lesbian lutes,
Mine every passion in the heart that roots,
Albeit your sweetness lives in Sappho's song,
Her love is barren . . . and the years are long.
And how she sang, and how she loved and cried,
Only by moonsick women will be heard.
The lyric thunder that my hand has hurled
Shall ring with resonant music through the world,
Quickening the blood in every lover's breast,
And then your beauty on my glory's crest
Shall ride, a goddess to eternity—
O little Maid of Sappho, come to me!

Unscathed in Love's dominion I have been,
And still a sceptic kissed the mouth of Sin.
Love seemed the dreariest of all things on earth
Until my passion filled your heart with mirth!
Like frightened bird my cynic wisdom flies
Before the cruel candour of your eyes.
As for sweet rain a valley sick with drouth,
Thus thirsts my love for your indifferent mouth!

And still your thoughts are wandering to the dell
Where Sappho walks and where her minions
dwell . . .
Be then, of maidens most corrupt, most chaste,
The one delight that I shall never taste!
And through the dreary æons yet unborn
The love of you shall rankle like a thorn!
Leave one last thrill for my sad heart to crave
In the ennui of heaven or the grave! . . .
Incite my passion, my embraces flee—
And never, never, never come to me!

O listen, listen to my heart-beat's call!
Aught else I say, it is not true at all.
She has her maidens whom her soft ways woo,
And they to her are no less dear than you.
For your dear sake I gladly fling aside
Laurels and loves! A beggar stripped of pride,
I only know I need you more than she—
O little Maid of Sappho, come to me!

FROM THE BOOK OF LOVE [1]

(By Blanche Shoemaker Wagstaff, 1913)

I WALK alone and cry out under the stars
As one in a desert I hunger for refreshment.
I have need of the coolness of some azure pool,
O, I would anoint my bosom with the clear water!
O, I would immerse myself in the emulous depths!
O, I would drink of ineffable dreams.
You, Beloved, are the silvery lake shimmering in the desert
of my youth.
You only can allay the fever of my spirit!
On your lips I should drain the fountain of life.
On your white breast I shall breath the perfume of numberless
lilies.
Therein I shall die a thousand deaths and arise reborn in the
awful splendor of your love . . .

* * * * * * *

Lay your hands,—softer than dove's wings—in my hands as
I may feel your young life flowing into mine thro' your
finger-tips.
Lay your eyes upon my eyes that I may grow tremulous
beneath the flutter of your eyelids.

[1] Copyright, 1913, by Mitchell Kennerley.

Lay your heart against my heart that I may hear your love summoning me to forgetfulness.
Lay your tresses about me that I may feel their warm sun streaming thro' my veins.
Lay your mouth on my mouth until all dissolves in mist about me. . . .

(Is it life? Is it death?)

* * * * * * *

You are as a million birds that sing unto my heart, O, Beloved.
Thro' the long nights I hear the chanting of blithe voices.
What divine minstrelsy! what ravishment. . . .
Is this multitudinous melody the rapture of your kiss?
Come to me, press upon my brow the coolness of your
Young lips that I may hear the thunder of your love in the night . . .

When will it end, the long vigil? . . .
What dawn will bring you forever unto me, O, my Beloved?
Life is but shadow.
Only you, my Beloved, are more real than shadow.
Beneath your caresses I am as one awakened unto life.
Your finger-tips bear presage of Divinity.
Your heart beats are a threnody sublime.
O, Beloved, you are as a white nenuphar lifting its snowy breast on a stream. In your bosom are all the treasures of Elysium. The scent of your skin is like Jasmine and honey-suckle.
Why is such loveliness withheld from me, O, Beloved?
When can I look upon you and say: "Beloved! all this beauty is mine forever."
When will it end, the long vigil? . . .

* * * * * * *

O, Miracle of love!
You whom I adore unto delirium,
Your arms are white lilies upon my bosom
Stars encircle me when your lips lean down to mine, there is the sound of many waters falling. There is the murmur of a million nightingales,—and the flash of brilliant lighting.
Caress celestial!
Moon-path of my dreams!
O, miracle of love—my divinity and my crucifixion . . .

* * * * * * *

When the young moon silvers the sky, the earth is ours,
We shall go into the forest and wander in the shadow of the pines,
I shall cover you with leaves, and we shall lie on the soft moss entwined like sisters.
And all the while I will know that the fragrance—
Of your skin is sweeter to me than the perfumes of a million roses. . . .

* * * * * * *

Let me enfold you in my hair.
Let me wind you as in a golden skein.
Give me the curve of your throat, milky white and rose, that I may place about it the glossy fillets of my hair.
Don it as a shining mantilla. . . .
Let my hair shower about you until you are radiant with perfume;
Let it ripple over you like the wind on summer wheat.
Then give me your lips that we may stand united beneath the downpour of its sunlight.
Let us be intermingled as two trees that have bent one single root. . . .

* * * * * * *

It rains, Beloved. . . .
The dripping of the rain is like the cool kisses of your mouth. . . .
I faint beneath the rapture of your lips.
Be no longer tender.
Cover me with frenzied kisses,—even as I would drench my body in the cruel torrents of the rain.
Envelop me from throat to ankle in delirium intolerable. . . .

* * * * * * *

To love you like the midnight storm!
To take you swooning unto death as the wind sweeps the waves in tempest!
To transport you unto delirium!
To hear the wild beating of your veins; to feel flame shuddering your blood and to agonize you with my ardor.
To crush you as a flower upon my breast,
To bear you away to some secret valley where I would love you into insensibility. . . .

* * * * * * *

If I think of you, I quiver from head to foot.
If I think of you tears flood my eyes.

If I pass you my heart quickens to suffocation and the blood seems to leave my body.
If I look into your eyes a sudden fire burns in my veins.
If I touch you I am as one possessed with madness: my arms tremble and my limbs totter beneath me.
To love you is to suffer the pangs of an intolerable agony.

* * * * * * *

I see you coming toward me. . . .
Silently you take me in your arms.
Our lips meet and our eyes close.
I feel the shuddering of your breast and the beating of your throat against mine.
We are enveloped in darkness.
We know nothing but the thunder of our veins. . . .
We are swept out into a sea of infinite oblivion.

KNOWLEDGE

(By George Reston Malloch. From *Poems and Lyrics.* 1916)

He. I have known many women, and I know
That love is sweeter unfulfilled.
Cast not your heavy eyes upon me so,
Love-weary child!

Our souls held commune sweetly, as they willed,
And it is sweeter, fairer, so.
Sweeter to sit, hands clasped and voices still'd,
In the evening glow.

She. I have known no man, ever—and I know
That all my body burns for you.
Surges from some vast ocean ebb and flow
My hot veins through.

And while our souls command, in me there grew
A hungry, passionate, wild glow.
My flesh is yearning for your flesh, a new,
Immense, strange throe.

BEAUTY

(By George Reston Malloch. From *Poems and Lyrics*)

BEAUTY unattempted,
She was my lover:
To me, too blessed,
Her white limbs did uncover.

Eyes had fill of rapture,
Lips had lips to kiss;
Sought I to capture
The deepest, deepest bliss.

Then the fiery pang
Smote through heart and core:
Then the love song rang
False, and rose no more.

RED IS THE COLOR OF BLOOD

(By Conrad Aiken. From *The Charnel Rose.* 1918)

* * * * * * *

RED is the color of blood, and I will seek it:
I have sought it in the grass.
It is the color of steep sun seen through eyelids.

It is hidden under the suave flesh of women,—
Flow there, quietly flows.
It mounts from the heart to the temples, the singing mouth—
As cold sap climbs to the rose.
I am confused in webs and knots of scarlet
Spun from the darkness;
Or shuttled from the mouths of thirsty spiders.

Madness for red! I devour the leaves of autumn.
I tire of the green of the world.
I am myself a mouth for blood . . .

Here, in the golden haze of the late slant sun,
Let us walk, with the light in our eyes,
To a single bench from the outset predetermined.
Look: there are seagulls in these city skies,
Kindled against the blue.
But I do not think of the seagulls, I think of you.

Your eyes, with the late sun in them,
Are like blue pools dazzled with yellow petals.
This pale green suits them well.
Here is your finger, with an emerald on it:
The one I gave you. I say these things politely—
But what I think beneath them, who can tell?

For I think of you, crumpled against a whiteness;
Flayed and torn, with a dulled face.
I think of you, writhing, a thing of scarlet,
And myself, rising red from that embrace.

November sun is sunlight poured through honey:
Old things, in such a light, grow subtle and fine.
Bare oaks are like still fire.
Talk to me: now we drink the evening's wine.
Look, how our shadows creep along the gravel!—
And this way, how the gravel begins to shine!

This is the time of day for recollections,
For sentimental regrets, oblique allusions,
Rose-leaves, shrivelled in a musty jar.
Scatter them to the wind! There are tempests coming.
It is dark, with a windy star.

If human mouths were really roses, my dear,—
(Why must we link things so?—)
I would tear yours petal from petal with slow murder.
I would pluck the stamens, the pistils,
The gold and the green,—
Spreading the subtle sweetness that was your breath
On a cold wave of death. . . .

Now let us walk back, slowly, as we came.
We will light the room with candles; they may shine
Like rows of yellow eyes.
Your hair is like spun fire, by candle-flame.
You smile at me—say nothing. You are wise.

For I think of you, flung down brutal darkness;
Crushed and red, with pale face.
I think of you, with your hair disordered and dripping.
And myself, rising red from that embrace.

DISCORDANTS

(By Conrad Aiken. From *Turns and Movies.* 1916)

VERMILIONED mouth, tired with many kisses,
Eyes, that have lighted for so many eyes,—
Are you not weary yet with countless lovers,
Desirous now to take even me for prize?

Draw not my glance, nor set my sick heart beating,—
Body so stripped, for all your silks and lace.
Do not reach out pale hands to me, seductive,
Nor slant sly eyes, O subtly smiling face.

For I am drawn to you, like wind I follow,
Like a warm amorous wind . . . though I desire
Even in dream to keep one face before me,
One face like fire, and holier than fire.

* * * * * * *

I walk beneath these trees, and in this darkness
Muse beyond seas of her from whom I came,
While you, with catlike step, steal close beside me,
Spreading your perfume round me like soft flame.

Ah! should I once stoop face and forehead to you,
Into and through your sweetness, a night like this,
In the lime-blossomed darkness feel your bosom,
Warm and so soft, and find your lips to kiss.

And tear at your strange flesh with crazy fingers,
And drink with mouth gone mad your eyes' wild wine,
And cleave to you, body with breathless body,
Till bestial were exalted to divine,—

Would I again, O lamia silked and scented,
Out of the slumberous magic of your eyes,
And your narcotic perfume, soft and febrile,
Have the romantic hardihood to rise,

And set my heart across great seas of distance
With love unsullied for her from whom I came?—
With catlike step you steal beside me, past me,
Leaving your perfume round me like soft flame.

THE DANCE OF LIFE

(By Conrad Aiken. From *Turns and Movies.* 1916)

* * * * * * *

GRACIOUS and lovable and sweet,
She made his jaded pulses beat,
And made the glare of streets grow dim
And life more soft and hushed for him. . . .
Over her shoulder now she smiled
Trustfully to him, like a child,
The while her fingers gayly moved
Along these white keys dearly loved,
Making them laugh a jocund measure,
Making them show and sing her pleasure. . . .
A smile that dwelt upon his eyes,
To see what mood might therein rise,—
What point of soft light seen afar
Which might dilate to moon or star. . . .
A smile that for a second space
Brooded wistfully on her face,
Opening soft her spirit's door,
Disclosing depths undreamed before:
Passionate depths of half-seen flame,
Young loveliness despising shame,
Desire that trembled to meet desire,
And fire that yearned to fuse with fire. . . .
And lightly then she turned away,
Ironic music rippled gay,—
Subtle sarcastic flippancies
Disguising speechless ecstasies . . .
"Play something else . . ." He rose to turn
The pages, while the deep nocturne
Struck slow rich chords of plangent pain,
Beautiful, into heart and brain;
A tortured, anguished, suffering thing
That seemed at once to cry and sing;
Despairing love that strove to find
The face beloved with fingers blind.
He saw her body's slender grace,
This drooping shoulder, shadowed face;
All of her body, hidden so
In saffron satin's flush and flow,—
Its white and simple loveliness,—
Came on his heart like giddiness,
Seductive as this music came;
Until her body seemed like flame,—

Intense white flame, so swiftly moving
That it gave scarcely time for loving;
But rapid as the sun she seemed,
A blinding light that flowed and streamed
And sang and shone through roaring space. . . .
The sun itself! for now her face,
Wherein this music's whole soul dwelt,
Drew him like helpless star, he felt
A fierce compulsion, reckless, mad,
A sweet compulsion, troubled, glad,
His trembling hands went out to her,
Her cool flesh made his senses blur;
While, head thrown backward, sinking dim,
She opened wide her soul to him. . . .

Past his life went whirls of lights,
Chaos of music, days and nights,
Her wild eyes yearned to lure him in
And close him up in dark of sin,
To lure him in and drink him down
And all his soul in love to drown. . . .
Her nakedness he seemed to see.
And breast to breast, and knee to knee,
Tremulous, breathless, swaying, burning,
Body to beautiful body yearning,
In joy and terror, flesh to flesh,
They flamed in passion's fine red mesh,—
Living in one short breath again
The cosmic tide's whole bliss and pain,
Darkness and ether, nebulous fire,
Vast suns whirled forth by vast desire,
Huge moons flung out with monstrous mirth
And stars in glorious hells of birth,
All jubilating, blazing, reeling,
In orgiastic splendor wheeling,
Moon torn from earth and star from sun
In screaming pain, titanic fun,
And stars whirled back to sun again
To be consumed in flaming pain! . . .
In them at last all life was met:
They were God's self! This earth had set.
Mad fires of life sang through their veins,
Ruinous blisses, joyous pains,
Life the destroyer, life the breaker,
And death, the everlasting maker. . . .

* * * * * * *

LAST WORDS TO MIRIAM

(By D. H. Lawrence. From *Amores*.[1] 1916)

YOURS is the shame and sorrow
  But the disgrace is mine;
Your love was dark and thorough,
Mine was the love of the sun for a flower
  He creates with his shine.

I was diligent to explore you,
  Blossom you stalk by stalk,
Till my fire of creation bore you
Shrivelling down in the final dour
  Anguish—then I suffered a balk.

I knew your pain, and it broke
  My fine, craftsman's nerve;
Your body quailed at my stroke,
And my courage failed to give you the last
  Fine torture you did deserve.

You are shapely, you are adorned,
  But opaque and dull in the flesh,
Who, had I but pierced with the thorned
Fire-threshing anguish, were fused and cast
  In a lovely illumined mesh.

Like a painted window: the best
  Suffering burnt through your flesh,
Undressed it and left it blest
With a quivering sweet wisdom of grace: but now
Who shall take you afresh?

Now who will burn you free,
  From your body's terrors and dross,
Since the fire has failed in me?
What man will stoop in your flesh to plough
  The shrieking cross?

A mute, nearly beautiful thing
  Is your face, that fills me with shame
As I see it hardening,
Warpening the perfect image of God,
  And darkening my eternal fame.

[1] Copyright, 1916, by B. W. Huebsch, New York.

MYSTERY

(By D. H. Lawrence. From *Amores*. 1916)

NOW I am all
One bowl of kisses,
Such as the tall
Slim votaresses
Of Egypt filled
For a God's excesses.

I lift to you
My bowl of kisses,
And through the temple's
Blue recesses
Cry out to you
In wild caresses.

And to my lips'
Bright crimson rim
The passion slips,
And down my slim
White body drips
The shining hymn.

And still before
The altar I
Exult the bowl
Brimful, and cry
To you to stoop
And drink, Most High.

Oh drink me up
That I may be
Within your cup
Like a mystery,
Like wine that is still
In ecstasy.

Glimmering still
In ecstasy,
Commingled wines
Of you and me
In one fulfil
The mystery.

REPROACH

(By D. H. Lawrence. From *Amores.* 1916)

HAD I but known yesterday,
Helen, you could discharge the ache
Out of the cloud;
Had I known yesterday you could take
The turgid electric ache away,
Drink it up with your proud
White body, as lovely white lightning
Is drunk from an agonised sky by the earth,
I might have hated you, Helen.

But since my limbs gushed full of fire,
Since from out of my blood and bone
Poured a heavy flame
To you, earth of my atmosphere, stone
Of my steel, lovely white flint of desire,
You have no name.
Earth of my swaying atmosphere,
Substance of my inconstant breath,
I cannot but cleave to you.

Since you have drunken up the drear
Painful electric storm, and death
Is washed from the blue
Of my eyes, I see you beautiful.
You are strong and passive and beautiful,
I come like winds that uncertain hover;
But you
Are the earth I hover over.

EXCURSION

(By D. H. Lawrence. From *Amores.* 1916)

I WONDER, can the night go by;
Can this shot arrow of travel fly
Shaft-golden with light, sheer into the sky
Of a dawned to-morrow,
Without ever sleep delivering us
From each other, or loosing the dolorous
Unfruitful sorrow!

What is it then that you can see
That at the window endlessly
You watch the red sparks whirl and flee
  And the night look through?
Your presence peering lonelily there
Oppresses me so, I can hardly bear
  To share the train with you.

You hurt my heart-beats' privacy;
I wish I could put you away from me;
I suffocate in this intimacy,
  For all that I love you;
How I have longed for this night in the train,
Yet now every fibre of me cries in pain
  To God to remove you.

But surely my soul's best dream is still
That one night pouring down shall swill
Us away in an utter sleep, until
  We are one, smooth-rounded.
Yet closely bitten in to me
Is this armour of stiff reluctancy
  That keeps me impounded.

So, dear love, when another night
Pours on us, lift your fingers white
And strip me naked, touch me light,
  Light, light all over.
For I ache most earnestly for your touch,
Yet I cannot move, however much
  I would be your lover.

Night after night with a blemish of day
Unblown and unblossomed has withered away;
Come another night, come a new night, say
  Will you pluck me apart?
Will you open the amorous, aching bud
Of my body, and loose the burning flood
  That would leap to you from my heart?

A BAD BEGINNING

(By D. H. Lawrence. From *Look! We Have Come Through.*[1] 1920)

THE yellow sun steps over the mountain-top
  And falters a few short steps across the lake—
Are you awake?

See, glittering on the milk-blue, morning lake
They are laying the golden racing-track of the sun;
The day has begun.

The sun is in my eyes, I must get up.
I want to go, there's a gold road blazes before
My breast—which is so sore.

What?—your throat is bruised, bruised with my kisses?
Ah, but if I am cruel what then are you?
I am bruised right through.

What if I love you!—This misery
Of your dissatisfaction and misprision
Stupefies me.

Ah, yes, your open arms! Ah, yes, ah, yes,
You would take me to your breast!—But no,
You should come to mine,
It were better so.

Here I am—get up and come to me!
Not as a visitor either, nor a sweet
And winsome child of innocence; nor
As an insolent mistress telling my pulse's beat.

Come to me like a woman coming home
To the man who is her husband, all the rest
Subordinate to this, that he and she
Are joined together for ever, as is best.

Behind me on the lake I hear the steamer drumming
From Austria. There lies the world, and here
Am I. Which way are you coming?

NEW YEAR'S EVE

(By D. H. Lawrence. From *Look! We Have Come Through.* 1920)

THERE are only two things now,
The great black night scooped out
And this fire-glow.

This fire-glow, the core,
And we the two ripe pips
That are held in store.

Listen, the darkness rings
As it circulates round our fire.
Take off your things.

Your shoulders, your bruised throat!
Your breasts, your nakedness!
This fiery coat!

As the darkness flickers and dips,
As the firelight falls and leaps
From your feet to your lips!

II. NEW YEAR'S NIGHT

Now you are mine, to-night at last I say it;
You're a dove I have bought for sacrifice,
And to-night I slay it.

Here in my arms my naked sacrifice!
Death, do you hear, in my arms I am bringing
My offering, bought at great price.

She's a silvery dove worth more than all I've got.
Now I offer her up to the ancient, inexorable God,
Who knows me not.

Look, she's a wonderful dove, without blemish or spot!
I sacrifice all in her, my last of the world,
Pride, strength, all the lot.

All, all on the altar! And death swooping down
Like a falcon. 'Tis God has taken the victim;
I have won my renown.

WEDLOCK

(By D. H. Lawrence. From *Look! We Have Come Through.* 1920)

I

COME, my little one, closer up against me,
Creep right up, with your round head pushed in my breast.

How I love all of you! Do you feel me wrap you
Up with myself and my warmth, like a flame round the wick?

And how I am not at all, except a flame that mounts off you.
Where I touch you, I flame into being;—but is it me, or you?

That round head pushed in my chest, like a nut in its socket,
And I the swift bracts that sheathe it: those breasts, those
thighs and knees,

Those shoulders so warm and smooth: I feel that I
Am a sunlight upon them, that shines them into being.

But how lovely to be you! Creep closer in, that I am more.
I spread over you! How lovely, your round head, your arms,

Your breasts, your knees and feet! I feel that we
Are a bonfire of oneness, me flame flung leaping round you,
You the core of the fire, crept into me.

II

And oh, my little one, you whom I enfold,
How quaveringly I depend on you, to keep me alive,
Like a flame on a wick!

I, the man who enfolds you and holds you close,
How my soul cleaves to your bosom as I clasp you,
The very quick of my being!

Suppose you didn't want me! I should sink down
Like a light that has no sustenance
And sinks low.

Cherish me, my tiny one, cherish me who enfold you.
Nourish me, and endue me, I am only of you,
I am your issue.

How full and big like a robust, happy flame
When I enfold you, and you creep into me,
And my life is fierce at its quick
Where it comes off you!

III

My little one, my big one,
My bird, my brown sparrow in my breast.
My squirrel clutching in to me;
My pigeon, my little one, so warm
So close, breathing so still.

My little one, my big one,
I, who am so fierce and strong, enfolding you,
If you start away from my breast, and leave me,
How suddenly I shall go down into nothing
Like a flame that falls of a sudden.

And you will be before me, tall and towering,
And I shall be wavering uncertain
Like a sunken flame that grasps for support.

IV

But now I am full and strong and certain
With you there firm at the core of me
Keeping me.

How sure I feel, how warm and strong and happy
For the future! How sure the future is within me;
I am like a seed with a perfect flower enclosed.

I wonder what it will be,
What will come forth of us,
What flower, my love?

No matter, I am so happy,
I feel like a firm, rich, healthy root,
Rejoicing in what is to come.
How I depend on you utterly
My little one, my big one!
How everything that will be, will not be of me,
Nor of either of us,
But of both of us.

V

And think, there will something come forth from us.
We two, folded so small together,
There will something come forth from us.
Children, acts, utterance
Perhaps only happiness.

Perhaps only happiness will come forth from us.
Old sorrow, and new happiness.
Only that one newness.

But that is all I want.
And I am sure of that.
We are sure of that.

LILIES IN THE FIRE

(By D. H. Lawrence. From *Love Poems and Others*,[1] 1913)

II

IS it with pain, my dear, that you shudder so,
Is it because I have hurt you with pain, my dear,

Did I shiver:—nay, truly I did not know—
A dewdrop may-be splashed on my face down here.

Why even now you speak through close-shut teeth.
I have been too much for you—Ah, I remember!

The ground is a little chilly underneath
The leaves—and, dear, you may consume me all to an ember.

You hold yourself as hard as if my kisses
Hurt as I gave them—you put me away—

Ah never I put you away: yet each kiss hisses
Hot as a drop of fire wastes me away.

III

I am ashamed, you wanted me not tonight,—
Nay, it is always so, you sigh with me.
Your radiance dims when I draw too near, and my free
Fire enters your petals like death, you wilt dead white.

Ah, I do know, and I am deep ashamed;
You love me while I hover tenderly
Like clinging sunbeams kissing you; but see
When I close in fire upon you, and you are flamed.

With the swiftest fire of my love, you are destroyed.
'Tis a degradation deep to me, that my best
Soul's whitest lightning which should bright attest
God stepping down to earth in one white stride,

Means only to you a clogged, numb burden of flesh
Heavy to bear, even heavy to uprear
Again from earth, like lilies, wilted and sere
Flogged on the floor, that—before stood up so fresh.

LOVE SONG

(By James Oppenheim, 1916 [1])

MY tiny hands not being able to weave a garland of the stars,
I made curious songs for my beloved,
To crown her with.

For it seemed to me that my beloved dwelt in Paradise,
Somewhere with Beatrice of the Italian Song,
And that a ring of stars would be a poor enough halo
For her radiant head.

Oh, but thus I wronged my love for my beloved:
For I made her a spirit, and left the greatest songs of all unsung!
The true love songs that a man sings with his lips, his eyes, his flesh:
Not to a heavenly spirit but to a human woman. . . .

So now I brush away Paradise and stars and curious songs like hindering cobwebs,
And see that my beloved is a breathing and laughing and passionate body,
And that her lips are firm and moist and sweet,
And her hands grasp tinglingly,
And the skin of her neck and shoulders is cool and fresh,
And that there is a fragrance about her that is lovelier to me than meadows of sun-dried hay,
And that her laughter is irresistible,
And that she in my arms is as much of glory and ecstasy that a man may hold,
Wherefore Paradise is unnecessary,
And the flame of stars works no more transformations than the flame of her lips meeting mine,
And the miracle of her actuality, her breathing flesh, and her contact with me,
Is as great a miracle as space may produce,
And so far as I am concerned, a greater.

[1] Copyright, 1916, by Century Co., New York.

DIESER LIEBE TOLLER PASCHING

(By Heinrich Heine.[1] Translated by Louis Untermeyer)

THIS mad carnival of loving,
This wild orgy of the flesh,
Ends at last and we two, sobered,
Look at one another, yawning.

Emptied the inflaming cup
That was filled with sensuous potions,
Foaming, almost running over—
Emptied is the flaming cup.

All the violins are silent
That impelled our feet to dancing,
To the giddy dance of passion—
Silent are the violins.

All the lanterns now are darkened
That once poured their streaming brilliance
On the masquerades and murmurs—
Darkened now are all the lanterns.

And to-morrow is Ash Wednesday,
And I put a cross of ashes
On your lovely brow, and tell you:
"Woman, you are dust. Remember!"

ICHE LIEBE SOLCHE WEISSE GLIEDER

I LOVE this white and slender body,
These limbs that answer Love's caresses,
Passionate eyes, and forehead covered
With heavy waves of thick, black tresses.

You are the very one I've searched for
In many lands, in every weather.
You are my sort; you understand me;
As equals we can talk together.

In me you've found the man you care for.
And, for a while, you'll richly pay me
With kindness, kisses and endearments—
And then, as usual, you'll betray me.

[1] Copyright, 1917, by Henry Holt & Co., New York.

LOVE NOT TOO MUCH

(By Bernard Gilbert. From *Rebel Verses*. 1918)

HAVE you too greatly loved?
Sister take warning!
Once let your soul be moved,
Sable your mourning;
If he be satiate,
Then an ingratiate,
Waiteth the dawning.

Shew not the passion
That stirs in your veins,
Far more alluring
To handle the reins,
His love ensuring. . . .
In masculine fashion
If certain—he wanes.

He the pursuer
Must ever press on,
Passionate wooer
Whilst you are a stone;
Shew but a touch,
Yet never too much
And the battle is won.

Man is a monster
Made to be stroked,
Close then your arms
Cover your charms;
Great the enticement
Of beauties when hidden,
Of passion well cloaked.

Crazed, he shall plead,
For what you yield gladly,
Fiercer his greed,
For what you give madly;
You may have measure
And still hold your treasure. . . .
Sister, take heed!

BACCHANTE

(By Blanche Shoemaker Wagstaff. From *Narcissus and Other Poems.*[1] 1918)

I AM inebriate with the sunlight's golden wine,
And I would love with an insensate fury!

Let me drain beauty even unto death!
Bring me a languid woman, perfumed, young,
Her dusky body hung with dazzling gems
And strange exotic iridescent stuffs—
Her wanton eyes like thirsty summer moons.

Oh, I would love with an insensate fury!
Bring me a pale flower-boy,
White-limbed like a young heifer in a field,
His lips a quiver with unknown desire. . . .
His soft throat virgin beneath my kiss,
His bosom like a bower of stars.

I would dance like a drunken fawn amid the wood,
Enraptured with the budding pollen-scents!

SONG OF PSYYHA

(By Charlotte Eaton. From *Desire.*[2] 1918)

I LOVE you passionately!
I love you as I love the sun overhead,
The earth underfoot,
The flowers that spring out of the earth,
The fresh breezes of the sea,
The morning star, gold-fluctuating Venus,
Or calm white steadfast Jupiter.

I love you passionately!
The brawny beautiful arms made for enfolding,
The eyes brown and limpid, brimming over with sweetness.

It is necessary to me that your heart beats,
And that you inhale with conscious pleasure the soft spring air,
That you love light, color, action, and are ambitious,
That you love the beauty of the human face and form,
And portray them both with mastery;

[1] Copyright, 1918, by James T. White & Co., New York.
[2] Copyright.

That you grasp that which is not graspable by all,
And know that which is not knowable to all;
That you have eyes—for a purpose,
A heart—for a purpose,
And an inquisitive soul—for a purpose.

MEDITATION—THE MIRROR

(By Charlotte Eaton)

SOMETIMES catching a glimpse of myself nude, in the mirror,
I am arrested, struck by the line of the shoulders, neck or bosom—
And I gaze intently, becoming absorbed, lost in visions of the Figurines of Tanagra,
And I dream of the days of Psappha and her comrade, Bilitis,
And the later days of Aspasia, loved of Pericles, honored of Phidias;
Virile days when physical defect was held an offense equal almost to crime;
And I remember also the aerial altitudes of the figures in the frescoes of Pompeii,
And I realize more fully that no man of unchaste thought of the human form could have so delightfully portrayed it—
And I adjust the mirror to reflect my body as I assume poses like those of the crouching Venuses of Naples,
Exclaiming to myself and admiring, forgetful that it is my own image that is before me,
For the strong impersonal emotion of the artist is upon me—and I am happy.

NIGHT-ON-THE-WATERS

(By Charlotte Eaton)

A STRONG woman embraced me,
All night holding me closely, her cheek against my cheek.
I, drawn, as to a magnet, slept soundly at intervals, she sleeping not at all,
All night, the wash of calm waters upon the ship's sides heard in the semi-darkness,

The pulse of the engine, the stoker's shovel feeding the furnaces;
At daybreak rising together, joyful, quick at repartee, laughing merrily,
A sense of new life-force budding at the heart of each.
Each absorbing the native qualities of the other, responding to the needs of the other,
Gladder because of that interchange, henceforth, each conscious of the affinity in the other,
But when on arriving, she left me, my joy went out as a candle that is suddenly extinguished,
So much her strong presence entered into, and possessed me.

REST

(By Pauline Cohn. From *The Pagan Anthology*[1])

I AM so tired—so tired.
I see too many people,
Read too many books.
Do too many things.

I hate the theaters,
I hate my work,
I want you,—only you. . . .
Come to me between the cool sheets
And let me burrow my head in your shoulder.
Kiss my two eyes. . . .

The moon is making peaceful patches on the yellow coverlet;
The hoof-beats of my thoughts are growing faint.

FAREWELL (TO D———)

(By Joseph Kling. From *The Pagan Anthology*)

I HAVE placed you
In the hollow of my hand
Little toy-woman,
And I gaze at you disdainfully
Or throw you lightly aside—
Or half-shut my eyes,

[1] Printed with the consent of the Publishers.

And poetize dreamily
About your dainty beauty—
Or put my mouth
Close to yours
So that I see only
The rose-red of your cheek
And feel the soft warmth
Of your lips—
Or whisper half-audibly
Of the passion that makes
My blood a tide of fire—
But after all,
You are in the hollow of my hand,—
I the master,
And you the marionette——

* * * *

My soul craves
A nobler happiness
Than passionate kisses
And the feel of soft flesh
In my fingers——

* * * *

Love is a lie . . .
Any man-animal
Whose lips
Are at your throat,
Whose hands are eager
For your breasts
Will drivel with lying tongue
About endless love——

* * * *

Aristocrats or gum-chewers,
They purr, and smirk, and sing-song questioningly,
Gaze at each other obliquely,
Body to body pressed——

* * * *

It is best to live alone,
Breathe alone,
Dream alone,
Alone with one's sacred self,
One's reveries,
And memories,
And heavenly fantasies——

Here I sit and think
The world of women
Will fret me no more;

And an hour from now,
Or to-morrow, it may be,
I will be talking to another
Pretty one
And every nerve in my body
Will exult as though
Inebriate with wine——

Morbleu! What is this
Insanity of man's flesh!

MAY WOODS

(By Zella Muriel Wright. From *The Pagan Anthology*)

YOU are like all the others—
"Will she
Or will she not
Give me her body?"
That is the question
That teases and torments you
And sends you reeling forth
Into the night,
Singing to the stars;
Or striding angrily down dusty roads,
Striking off the heads
Of helpless flowers
With your cane.

And I smile at your agitation
The smile you call inscrutable.
I smile because I know
Only too well
That sooner or later—sooner or later—
Even I,
Knowing the pain
And the cost of the aftermath of love. . . .
And after you have known
The full strength of my arms
To hold you.
After you have felt the sting and fire of me,
After you have known my longest kiss—
A kiss which almost strangles——

Instead of being more to you
I shall be less. . . .

And you will go
Because
No longer
I smile
The smile
The smile you call inscrutable.

SONG OF CREATION:. ETÉ

(By Zella Muriel Wright. From *The Pagan Anthology*)

IT is good to be loved.
A man waits for me
Who will cover my body with kisses;
He will bury his face in my hair;
He will weep with joy at the touch of me.
It is good to be loved.

I wait for you in the dusk.
How strange you seem tonight!
Your eyes glisten with a burnished light,
Like the eyes of a serpent,
Like the eyes of a god.
Wherever your eyes are turned upon me
My flesh burns
As tho' two hot coals were laid upon it;
But I do not move.
Why do you never take your eyes from me?
Why do you tremble and grow so pale,
You who were so radiant and rigid
A moment ago?
You touch me and drop weakly in a heap;
There is no power in your muscles.
But it is only the weakness before madness;
A madness that gives you a ten-fold strength.
For a second I shrink with fear,
Lest in your ferocity, you devour me.
Then I laugh—my whole body laughs;
But I move not.
On my lips there is a faint smile,
Shall I tell you why I smile?

I smile because I am happy;
Because this instant is my instant
In this eternity of eternities.
Tonight I understand that life is not
The groping, broken, half-thing
It has always seemed.

RIVALS

(By Archie Austin Coates. From *The Pagan Anthology, II*)

ALONG the Avenue of an afternoon,
Lithe, slim youths
Sauntering . . .
Sleek of hair, and trim, and narrow of hip,
With white, soft necks, and ties puffed out,
Beneath faces artfully made just a bit too beautiful
And not quite manly.
They stroll slowly,
Shooting side-glances into passing faces,
Meaningly.

At the corner
A painted woman
Shambles into a doorway . . .
Her lips are of dry flame,
And in her eyes are flames of hatred,
Hatred and scorn, bitter and inexpressible,
For these slim youths,
Her rivals.

THE BEAUTY LOVER

(By Claire Bu Zard. From *The Pagan Anthology, II*)

THE round, pink, laughing girl bathes,
And the thin, grey, silent girl watches.
. . . . And afterwards,
When the bather dries herself,
And puts powder under her arms,
And lies down, like a sleepy flower,—
The grey girl catches her around the hips, violently,
And kisses her:
Surprised, the pink girl draws away;
And the grey girl—
(Poor little restless lover of beauty)
Apologizes
And is ashamed.

YVONNE

(By Walter Jack Duncan. 1918)

YVONNE it was I met in Angers,
Yvonne Moreau—if that's her name;
But let no sceptical éstranger
Doubt, but rather sing her fame.
For she was rare! A maiden never
Breathed her graces did excel!
Mistake me not; how brief soever
Our love, at least I loved her well.

Seated at a window, dreaming
O'er my morning omelette,
Saw I her—tho' without seeming—
Struggling with her bicyclette.
Saw I first a knee, a stocking;
Then those jolie jambes of hers!
Ah, Messieurs! it's no use talking:
As I live, I have seen worse.

One so young, thought I, so pretty,
Little knows, on her machine,
Half the charms—the more's the pity!—
She reveals at seventeen.
Still she lingered, still she hovered,
Shyly blushing in distress,
That she could not keep 'em covered,
Could not hide 'em 'neath her dress.

Sweet the sight was, sweet her trouble,
As she tried, poor child! in vain,
To conceal, by bending double,
What each moment showed more plain.
Strange! thought I, her bycyclette
Has such a fancy for this spot.
Can she think—But I forget:—
Garçon! warm this chocolate!

Would she—? might she—? mused I, oddly,
As once more she pedaled by,
(For the strain was grown un-godly;
Yet no thought of harm had I.)
Can it be—? I saw her turning—
Turning to come back again!
Then it was I fell a-yearning. . . .
Oh the villany of men!

Qu'est-ce que c'est que ça? cried I
To the Maitre d'hotel.
"Une Steno-Dactylographie."
"A Steno- what? La Ma'moiselle."
Bien! quoth I, she's apropos.
You say they call her Miss Yvonne?
"Mais oui—!" Pardon! I'll have to go,
For I have need of such an one.

And was she coy? And did she fear
A stranger's voice? his first advances?
Yvonne! Yvonne!! "O-ui, M'sieur."
How lightly off her wheel she dances!
"Que voulez-vous?" she begs so sweet,
I 'gin to doubt, and then to worry.
"A—just what is the word for it?
Have you, perchance, a dictionary?"

Ah la belle France! so old and famous
For countless joys that cheer, and bless;
None so much are like to shame us
As these angels in distress.
None so sweet, with grace and charms full,
Labor in the fields of love,
Make such dear, delightsome arms-full,
Soft, delicious, fond enough!

Your Pa? I ask; and where is he, dear?
"Mon pere? Son Colonel's cheval grooms."
Your Ma? "En Toulouse." What does she there?
"Ma mere sells cabbages, and brooms."
And you so young, so all alone?
But you will die of poverty!
"Mais je travaille!" Indeed, Yvonne?
"A Steno-Dactylographie."

And so she did, beyond compare!
How faithfully she filled her task!
Accounts were sadly in arrear;
In truth, it was too much to ask.
Still would she smile, and sing one song:
"Je sais que vous-etes jolie."
She charmed me with it all day long:
"Je sais que c'est mon folie."

Four days and nights she kept it going.
"Tis time," said I, "I must be gone."
And would she tell me what was owing?
Ah no, you little know Yvonne!

"Vous-etes un artist, Jacques, compleet!"
An artist? I? What do you mean?—
And you're another, chère petite;
The first I've met at seventeen!

No longer now I go, regretting,
That all the girls, where'er I stray,
Have strangely taken to 'cycletting,
And practice daily in Angers.
No more the sight fills me with wonder,
(I only hope the fashion grows).
Somehow it makes the heart grow fonder.
Pourquoi? Messieurs! Who knows—who knows?

I WANT OF YOU

(By *Michael Strange*. From *Poems*.[1] 1919)

I WANT of you not this intellectual passion
Always consciously composing its code
Of liberties! considerations!
Nor this reasonable loftiness,
Treating each circumstance with oratorical gestures
Toward some invisible public.
Nor do I exact this fraternal fairness
In sexual emergency—
Nor even this cerebral impartiality
In passional disaster—
Phew, such attitudes savouring to me
Of affectation masking depleted instinct,
Or of egomania parading as a new charity.
Listen! I want your mouth whispering over my heart
"This complete moment
Is moulding us eternally together!"
I want our limbs, twisted, luminous,
Crushing the physical into spiritual invocation,
Commingling! Ascending!
Nor afterward any slamming down of the lid
Upon emerging spirit.
Since I desire that consummation become a beginning,
A beginning, stammering our souls with tenderness,
Inflating us with moods palpitating—
Disconcerting—mysterious—as dreams—
Moods confessional—adventurous,

[1] Copyright, 1919, by Brentano's, New York.

Flickering our fancy with spectre forms
Triumphant—transcendant—angelic—
Since I admonish consummation to become a beginning,
And so mortal love, the legitimate mediator
Between God and Man.

A SONG

(By Michael Strange. From *Poems*. 1919)

FOR what have you sought my love,
Along those flashing wastes of passion?
Who move so wearily as the dawn's unwilling step
Over-stamped in ruins of unlimited woe.
O what crucifix you, tortured
Into nailing yourself against?
That your arms are become so attenuate
As those stark supplicating limbs of nightmare.
I wonder, have you assaulted life in darkness
And whispering
I need you so! oh let me—
Yet when the spear entering, nailing you
Into frantic submission,
You crying out from the very center nerve
Of such ecstasy, I have fear!
Since you selling then into bondage
What you might surmise only—
And for the witchery of moments.
Since you denying of yourself
More than you could have known
Before self-betrayal.
And all in order to induce
Those scarlet wings of appalling lips
To glisten, close, across your mouth.
Yet when this tease of pleasure
Titillating curious truth-stained exclamations out of you
And their sense languishing mateless unanswered along the air—
Ah, then you turning to regard
The gracious youth of your sleeping love
Alongside of your waking, ageless, heart.

EMOTIONAL

(By Michael Strange. From *Resurrecting Life.*[1] 1921)

LEAN your mouth well over into the moonlight
So that I may kiss it full, O chance—
Press me into your pungent arms
So jagged with nightmare—so rent with spasmodic glories—
So pliant with momentary relaxing—
O your arms so compact with variety—
For no strident with triton freshness
And glossed as if by spray shaken off a burst of godliness
Out of glacier streams—
And now slippery-darkened with that moulten calm
Preceding some sinister extase—

O chance—stinging—refreshing
Like a sudden rain of flowers across my being that is ever lid
So deliberately accessible—
O chance teasing with evasive glimpses of some further rea
Ever lightening towards breathless eventualities—
Aye, for ever alternately veiling—disclosing—
That face approximate of Heaven—and hell.

I am resting by the edge of the sea—
But in my arm is a curve imperceptible
For the weight of your head—lover—comrade—
My feet are damp with the vigorous jet of the sea—
My body is splashed in a sudden pour of sunlight
Spreading down now in widening—blazing torrents—
From behind the pushed-away clouds—
Yet I long to be chilled—warmed—and surpassing these—
And by our limbs co-mingling lover—comrade.

Sad, we must find each other—ourselves—life—out
Through this impediment of love—
(With its billion toe-stubbings along the Olympian track)

Pathetic we must exercise by falling out of the sky
And chasing our own tails for awhile—
Instead of feeling our manes tearing out behind us
Along those freezing spiral vapours of the Continuous Ass
sion.

O You and I have stood poignantly close upon the edge i
perilous slanting—
And with sublime sunbeams bouncing from upturned fac
face
And measuring upon each utter equality of dazzle—

[1] Copyright, 1921, by Alfred A. Knopf, New York.

you and I have leant fraternally together in a light
educing to proportionate form at last—
ll those melancholy grotesques of conscious life—
ea and together heard a conclusive goodness affirming
hrough vast harp-sweet spaces—
hen—then—the reverential swoon of our knees
efore this momentary shining out of the beyond
as been cause for a touch between us—
h, what union in this accidental knocking of knees
efore a Shared Presence—
/hen suddenly—suddenly—
he thrown-back hood of vision clamping down precipitant,
nd a sadness in the air as of some Divine Retreat—
/hen my claw stirring—waking—reaching out—
nd in your answering motion a gracious shoot of reverberating "yea"—
hen your eyes becoming a liquid gale
nportunate—parting—pressing aside my branches—
nd your mouth a distortion of fire skipping—falling—
linging strangely among my blossoms—
ly blossoms opening—shedding for you in ghastly broad abandon—
love—love—unequipped—unaware
f the subtle fatality in your own repletion.

BREAD POEMS

(By Evelyn Scott. From *Precipitations.*[1] 1920)

LULLABY

I LEAN my heart against the soft bosomed night:
A white globed breast,
And warm and silent flowing,
The milk of the moon.

EMBARKATION OF CYTHERA

Like jellied flowers
My inflated curves
Melt in the peaceful stagnance of the bath.
If I were to die
I would resist the final agony
With only a faint quiver
From my escaping thighs.

Copyright, 1920, by Nicholas L. Brown, New York.

CHRISTIAN LUXURIES

The red fountain of shame gushes up from my heart
I throw back my long hair and the fountain fleets it as
Like a fiery fan.
My wide stretched arms are white coral branches.
The liquid shadows seek between my amber breasts.

But the fire is cool.
It cannot burn me.

THE TUNNEL

(By Evelyn Scott. From *Precipitations*)

I HAVE made you a child in the womb,
Holding you in sweet and final darkness.
All day as I walk out
I carry you about,
I guard you close in secret where
Cold eyed people cannot stare.
I am melted in the warm dear fire,
Lover and mother in the same desire.
Yet I am afraid of your eyes
And their possible surprise.
Would you be angry if I let you know
That I carried you so?

I could kiss you to death
Hoping that, your protest obliterated,
You would be
Utterly me.
Yet I know—how well!—
Like a shell,
Hollow and echoing,
Death would be,
With a roar of the past
Like the roar of the sea.
And what is lifeless I cannot kill!
So you would make death work your will.

In most intimate touch we meet,
Lip to lip,
Breast to breast,
Sweet.
Suddenly we draw apart
And start.

Like strangers surprised at a road's turning
We see,
I, the naked you;
You, the naked me.
There was something of neither of us
That covered the hours,
And we have only touched each other's bodies
Through veils of flowers.
But let us smile kindly,
Like those already dead,
On the warm flesh
And the marriage bed.

SWEENEY ERECT

(By T. S. Eliot. From *Poems.*[1] 1920)

And the trees about me,
Let them be dry and leafless; let the rocks
Groan with continual surges; and behind me,
Make all a desolation. Look, look, wenches!

PAINT me a cavernous waste shore
Cast in the unstilled Cyclades,
Paint me the bold anfractuous rocks
Faced by the snarled and yelping seas.

Display me Aeolus above
Reviewing the insurgent gales
Which tangle Ariadne's hair
And swell with haste the perjured sails.

Morning stirs the feet and hands
(Nausicaa and Polypheme),
Gesture of orang-outang
Rises from the sheets in steam.

This withered root of knots of hair
Slitted below and gashed with eyes,
This oval O cropped out with teeth:
The sickle motion from the thighs

Jackknifes upward at the knees
Then straightens out from heel to hip
Pushing the framework of the bed
And clawing at the pillow slip.

[1] Copyright, 1920, by Alfred A. Knopf, New York.

Sweeney addressed full length to shave
  Broadbottomed, pink from nape to base,
Knows the female temperament
  And wipes the suds around his face.

(The lengthened shadow of a man
  Is history, said Emerson
Who had not seen the silhouette
  Of Sweeney straddled in the sun).

Tests the razor on his leg
  Waiting until the shriek subsides.
The epileptic on the bed
  Curves backward, clutching at her sides.

The ladies of the corridor
  Find themselves involved, disgraced,
Call witness to their principles
  And deprecate the lack of taste.

Observing that hysteria
  Might easily be misunderstood;
Mrs. Turner intimates
  It does the house no sort of good.

But Doris, towelled from the bath,
  Enters padding on broad feet,
Bringing sal volatile
  And a glass of brandy neat.

OF POLITICIANS

(By Thomas Burke. From *The Song Book of Quong Lee*[1] 1920)

UPON a time the amiable Bill Hawkins,
  Married a fair wife, demure and of chaste repute,
Keeping closely from her, however,
And knowledge of the manner of man he had been.

Upon the nuptial night,
Awaking and finding himself couched with a woman,
As had happened on divers occasions,
He arose and dressed and departed,
Leaving at the couch's side four goodly coins.

[1] Copyright, 1920, by Henry Holt & Co., New York.

But in the street,
Remembering the occasion and his present estate of marriage,
He returned with a haste of no—dignity,
Filled with emotions of an entirely disturbing nature,
Fear that his wife should discover his absence,
And place evil construction upon it, being uppermost.

Entering stealthily, then, with the toes of the leopard,
With intention of quickly disrobing,
And rejoining the forsaken bride,
He perceived her sitting erect on the couch,
Biting shrewdly, with a distressing air of experience,
At one of the coins.

A LOVE LESSON

(By Thomas Burke. From *The Song Book of Quong Lee.* 1920)

LAST night I dreamed of the maid with yellow curls,
She came to me in the room above my shop,
And we two were alone, freed from the laws of day.
I held her then to myself.
I took from her her clothing, garment by garment,
And watched them fall about her feet—
White petals of a flower.
And I drew from her to myself her thoughts, one by one,
As often I had wished, till all of her was mine.
And then I was sad, for nothing was left to love.

And quickly I clothed her again, garment by garment,
And gave her back her thoughts, one by one,
And awoke in joy.
I was glad that the dream was a dream,
And that all of her was not mine;
For I had learned
That love released from bond, and unburdened of its fetters,
Is love no longer.

SONNETS TO AURELIA

(By Robert Nichols. From *Aurelia.*[1] 1920)

"LOVER," you say; "how beautiful that is,
That little word;" and still you sigh it over
Till the twin syllables become a kiss
Against the brow your lips' light whisperings cover.
Yes, it is beautiful. I have marked it long,
Long in my dusty head its jot secreted,
Yet my heart never knew this word a song
Till in the night softly by you repeated.

"Lover" again! sounds not this holy word
Worthy the gift its virtues celebrate,
Whose very gentle syllables half-heard
Seem the low sigh of one love-satiate?
Turn, sweet, and let your lips to me discover
The final sweetness lies in the word "lover."

X

When, having written much, I reach my span,
And you, that you, shall halt beside my grave,
Whom I to delirium loved as living man,
Mourn not that me, though, mayhap, the World ha
Honoured my tomb with register of worth
In difficult assessment of my due,
Recorded my rarer services on earth,
And grief protested, likely enough true.

Mourn not that me, but gazing on the mould,
Summon to memory my eyes' keen light,
My thorough hands, my arms so hard in hold,
My lips whose kisses burned away the night:
For, though the World may curious worths discov
My pride it is I was your well-prized lover.

XIII

Sometimes I think you know not what love is
But only pang of amorous delight:
The terrible resuscitation of the kiss,
And the prolonged love-agonies of the night.
Oh, when I so do think, then I could sear
These loving lips with the consuming coal,
Submit these limbs to the machine to tear
And ruin my body to secure your soul.

[1] Copyright, 1920, by E. P. Dutton & Co., New York.

For rather would I perish as a man,
  And hateful as a maniac seem to you,
Than that our joy, which in true love began,
  Should, in abuse, turn to its birth untrue.
  Wherefore take heed lest, in your passion strong,
  Your acts read right but your intention wrong.

XIX

Come, let us sigh a requiem over love
  That we ourselves have slain in love's own bed,
Whose hearts that had courage to drink enough
  Lacked courage to forbid the taste they bred,
Which body captained soon, till, in disgust,
  These very hearts of bodily surfeit died,
Poisoned by that sweet overflow of lust
  Whose past delight our substance deified.

No courage, no, nor pleasure have we now,
  To our own frantic bodies are we tossed,
Only sometimes exhaustion will allow
  Us peace to observe the image of love's ghost,
  With torturing voice and with hid face return
  Faintly, as even now, to bid us mourn.

XXVII

I must remember now how once I woke
  To find the harsh lamplight stream upon her bed,
The ceiling tremble in its giddy smoke,
  And on the wall the agile spider spread,
To hear the reverberate vault of silence shake
  Beneath the hollow crash of midnight's toil,
Whose profound strokes waned impotent to break
  The charnel stillness of the city's soul.

These I remember, but would more forget
  What is most fixed, whereby I am undone,
How white, how still you lay, though shuddering yet
  In the last luxury of oblivion,
  As if of Death you had taken love long denied,
  With on your face the bliss of suicide.

SUMMER STORM

(By Louis Untermeyer. From *The New Adam*.[1] 1920)

WE lay together in the sultry night.
A feeble light
From some invisible street-lamp crept
Into the corner where you slept;
Fingered your cheeks, flew softly round your hair,
Then dipped in the sweet valley of your breasts
And fluttered, like a bird between two nests,
Till it lay quiet there.
My eyes were closing and I may have dreamed—
At least it seemed
That you and I
Had ceased to be but were somehow
As earth and sky. . . .

The night grew closer still, and now
Heat-lightnings played between us and warm thrills
Ran through the cool sides of the trembling hills.
Then darkness and a tension in the black
Hush like a breath held back;
A rippling through the ground, a windless breeze
That reached down to the sensitive roots of trees;
A tremor like the pulse of muffled knocks,
Or like the silent opening of locks . . .
There was a rising of unfettered seas
With great tides pulling at the stars and rocks
As though to draw them all together.
Then in a burst of blinding weather.
The lightnings flung
Long, passionate arms about the earth that clung
To her wild lover.
Suddenly above her
The whole sky tumbled in a sweeping blaze,
Gathering earth in one tight-locked embrace,
Drenching her in a flood of silver flame.
Hot thunders came;
And still the storm kept plunging, seeking ever
The furthest cranny, till the faraway
Streams felt each penetrating quiver
And the most hidden river
Rose and became released. . . .

At last the stabbings ceased,
The thunders died.

[1] Copyright, 1920, by Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York.

But still they lay
Side by side,
While moonbeams crept
Into the heavenly corner where earth slept;
Dipping among her rosy hills, lighting above
Her curved and sloping hollows, till
She too was still.
Beloved and blest,
His cloudy head lay, seeking rest
In the sweet-smelling valley of her breast,
And each was huddled in each other's love;
Or so it seemed. . . .
My eyes were closing and I may have dreamed.

IVORY AND ROSE

(By Louis Untermeyer. From *The New Adam.* 1920)

HERE in this moonlit room, I watch you slip
One shoulder from your dress and turn to me;
A polished statue, flushing to the tip
Of marble fingers gradually.

And, like a ripe moon out of flimsy clouds,
Blossoms the shining fulness of your breast.
These curves conceal, this dear perfection shrouds
A soft, miraculous nest.

Your ivory body pulses as the white
Flesh catches flame and rosy tremblings move
Over this sanctuary of delight,
The last asylum of our love.

ALMOST

(By Louis Untermeyer. From *The New Adam.* 1920)

MY sweetheart has beneficent arms
So full of tenderness and fire,
They almost cheat her other charms
The way they rouse and still desire.

My sweetheart has the kindest breast,
  Two heavens with each a single star;
They give me everything but rest,
  So strange these rosy pillows are.

My sweetheart has the hungriest lips
  They seek and press unsparingly;
They probe until she almost slips
  Among her kisses into me.

My sweetheart's body is a cry,
  A poignant and resistless call;
It almost makes me wonder why
  She hasn't any mind at all.

SONG

(By Alice Corbin. From *Poetry*. 1920)

I KNOW you beautiful and fair
  Beyond delight;
I know our bodies bare
In love unite,
Yet weep for passion's flight.

I weep because the rose
Must fade away;
I weep because of words that lead astray;
I weep that passion never tells
What it longs to say.

Though your breast lie on my breast,
Still in vain the lover's quest;
Like the dryads in the woods
Powerless to tell their moods—
In a world of forest spells
Never half the lover tells.

THE BETROTHAL

(By Edna St. Vincent Millay. 1920)

OH, come, my lad, or go, my lad,
  And love me if you like!
I hardly hear the door shut
  Or the knocker strike.

Oh, bring me gifts or beg me gifts,
And wed me if you will!
I'd make a man a good wife,
Sensible and still.

And why should I be cold, my lad,
And why should you repine,
Because I love a dark head
That never will be mine?

I might as well be easing you
As lie alone in bed,
And waste the night in wanting
A cruel dark head!

You might as well be calling yours
What never will be his,
And one of us be happy;
There's few enough as is.

SONNET

(By Edna St. Vincent Millay. 1921)

I, BEING born a woman and distressed
By all the needs and notions of my kind,
Am urged by your propinquity to find
Your person fair, and feel a certain zest
To bear your body's weight upon my breast,—
So subtly is the fume of life designed,
To clarify the pulse and cloud the mind
And leave me once again undone, possessed.
Think not for this, however,—the poor treason
Of my stout blood against my staggering brain—
I shall remember you with love, or season
My scorn with pity; let me make it plain:
I find this frenzy insufficient reason
For conversation when we meet again.

BRIDEGROOM

By Katherine W. McCluskey. From *The Pagan.* 1920)

PITY, O Bridegroom,
The perilous joy of the bride!

In the searching lights of her eyes,
In the fugitive flush of her cheeks,
In the fainting pink of her palm,

In the speed-mad pulse of her wrist,
In the throb and flight of her heart,
In the lifting foam of her breasts,
In her pale, excited smile,—
A dim flame, blown in a wind,—
See the perilous happiness,
The dizzy, peering happiness,
Hid in the blood of your bride.

Eve alone
Of the generations of women,
Lacked the perilous joy of the bride.
Fully innocent, fully ignorant,
Gurgled her sweet child-laughter.
But to her daughters,
Down to the wayward moderns,
Whispers and echoes what she learned
From giving her secret self,
From giving her red rose heart,
From giving her cream rose breast,
From giving her crystal dreams,—
Dividing her trinity,
Her soul and her flesh and her mind,
With Adam.

So began, O Bridegroom,
The perilous happiness,
A bubble, ready to break,
A sphere made of colors alone,
Your bride with her searching eyes
Holds out to your snatching hands.

WATTEAU PANELS

(By Royall Snow. From *The Pagan.* 1920)

I *A melody with sombre chords*

PIERROT draws aside the willows
As a curtain,
And naïve Columbine steps through.
In the moonlight—
Like the twinkling of silver minnows
The gurgling brook winks at Pierrot.
He had come there before.

II *Danse Macabre*

From a hidden orchestra
Drifts in blurred melody the valse hesitation
A dancer presses his partner's hand
Commandingly.

III *Acquiescence*

"No," whispers the woman
And turns her head
So that the moonlight falls on her bare throat.

L'ATTENTE

By Harold Greenthal. From the French of Tristan Klingsor. 1921)

I

TO make our love memorable
I carried wine from Shiraz;
I prepared a bed broidered with silk
And two velvet pillows;
Then I perfumed the water in the vases,
To bathe you after the amorous combat.

I bought figs full of seed,
Dried raisins, and cakes
Of farina, sugar and rice,
To eat while toying with you,
My little dear,—
But you never came. . . .

II

LA TETE COUPEE

If you ever say again,
Old Shemseddin, grey-bearded knave,
That you have had in your bed
The body of my little Zuleika,
That you have possessed her
For three Ormuz sugar-plums

And a piece of gold,—
Beware lest someone soon find,
Among the roses of your garden—
Where jets of water sing all night—
The severed head of Shemseddin!

III

LA RUSE

Old Khalif with the perfumed beard,
You have imprisoned my beloved
In a hundred robes of silk
And scarlet velvet:
But the five little white mice
That are her fingers
Know how to deliver quickly
Her flower-fleshed body,
While the eunuch at the door
Sleeps like a heron on one foot.

IV

LES MOTIFS D'AMOUR

I loved the first for her supple, cat-like body in its green robe;

The second, for her mouth, delicately shaded with rouge, like a strange flower in bloom;

The third, for her hair, starred with precious stones and damp with all the perfumes of Arabia;

And you, ravishing Zuleika, who smile so proud for your eyes, pure as painted porcelain.

V

L'EVEIL

Cross your bare legs in your bed;
Scratch the tip of your nose
With your slender, tapering fingers;
Rub with your soft knuckles
The two violets of your rimmed eyes. . . .
And dream.

From the top of the Arabian minaret
There issues
The short, sad melopoeia
Of one of the faithful,
And you yawn like a little cat,
As though tired of love,
And you think of the one,
From Ormuz or Endor,
Who quitted you this morning,
Leaving his purse of golden pieces
And the blue marks of his kisses.

VI

LE CADI PERCLUS

O venerable Cadi,
Nothing now remains
Of your voluptuous vigor
Of yesterday.
Your poor heart is cold,
Your body is crippled,
Your face is seamed with wrinkles
And Love has strung bulging pouches
Under your eyes.

Your sex, which hangs pendant
At the base of your belly,
Is like a soft banana of Ispahan
Between two shriveled oranges
From Damas.

A BARGAIN

(By Harold Greenthal. 1921)

A DRACHMA? List to me, thou worn-out couch of love! Hast thou at thy hovel, a bed of softest down which holds the imprint of each limb, that thou should'st ask me for a drachma?

"And do thy slaves run round in silks and golden anklets, and do they serve to thy unfortunate guest, a skyphos of aged wine and dried figs from Rhodes that he may the while forget thee? A drachma! Good father Zeus, dost hear?

"A drachma? Bah! Why, Wrinkles, the naiads would forsake the woods for that, and Lais would turn over in her tomb! I guess thou playest upon the innocent, but, though I'm still a youth, full many curious things I've done as known. And yet thou askest for a drachma!

"Away, and trim the bristling hair around thy lips, and clean thy nails, and wash thine arms in milk! A drachma! What's that thou sayest? Three obols? Ah, well, I'll go with thee for that, my dear, I'll go with thee for that!"

SEDUCTION

(By Harold Greenthal. 1921)

THE Lily swayed coquettishly,
And the Rose,
Whom the murky night had left
Drunk with dew,
Was fired with desire,
And the passion burned his cheeks.

He bent lover-like
Over the virgin Lily,
And his green arms,
Quivering amorously in the breeze,
Slipped 'round her dainty waist,
And her lithe body shook with emotion.
She raised her drooping head,
And held her fresh young lips to his!

The lustful Rose
Now strained her close,
And the virgin Lily struggled
As though she were being violated,
Yet, yielding graciously the next instant,
Swung wantonly against her lover! . . .

Suddenly they quiet grew,
And slowly disentangled
Leaf from leaf,
And drew apart.
The Violets, quidnuncs every one,
Had looked on all the while
And passed the scandal to the Larks;
Narcissus, becoming inflamed,

Embraced himself
With quite unnatural ardor.
But the ravished Lily
Hung her head in shame,
And tried to hide
The tiny bits of gold
That lay sprinkled
Here and there
Along her happy petals.

LÂILA SLEEPS

(By Harold Greenthal. 1921)

THOU art tired, Lâila, warm and tired. Thine eyes stay longer shut than open, for poppy-dust is flying in the air, and a diamond-drop, fresh as rose dew, glitters from the dimple in thy chin.

Sleep, lovely Lâila, sleep, and I will watch thee through the night. The moon's soft lambent rays light up thy ruby lips; thy throat gleams white, and thy flower-like breasts tempt my wanton finger-tips!

How calm the night! How calm her sleep! How hot the fire in my veins! Ah, little houri, now art thou mine. In my hands are thine—so pink and soft and warm! I steal a hasty kiss from thy red lips and bathe my face in the odor of thy hair!

Sleep on, my Lâila, nor ope thy weary lids. Through this long night of love I'll guard thee. Sleep on, O tired eyes; O ruby lips sleep on; O musky mole, O warm, soft hands, O kiss-red breasts, sleep on, sleep on!

A UNE REBELLE

(By Pierre St. Ardienne. From the French of Ibykos de Rhodes)

I

THEY say that you refuse to hear my prayer, O pale Hippolyte. Father Aristophanes tells me that you want to remain chaste.

Fool! This is mere illusion!

You must learn that Nature wishes, everywhere, the swoonings, the raptures, the ecstasies of dishevelled youth. Nature is strong. No woman, however ugly—and you are adorable, O my Hippolyte—has escaped the pangs of desire.

Couch yourself naked, this evening, in your lonely bed, and think of me before you drift to sleep.

Think of my heavy profile, of perfect design!

Think of my hair which has the shade of violets in the moss and which undulates on my little ivory forehead!

Think of my eye-brows, black and joined, of my blue-green eyes which burn with a madness and of the smile of my indefatigable mouth!

Think of my proud breasts which swell my purple tunic!

Think of my fresh arms and my burning thighs!

Think of my fingers, the light fingers of a lyre-player!

Think of my treasure, almost hermaphrodite!

Then, to-morrow morning, your eyes shall be rimmed with dark circles, O Hippolyte, seeker of vain chimeras! You will come to the Palace of Sappho, you will sound at the great door of the park, and my pupils, your comrades, casting roses under your sandals, singing an epithalamium, will escort you to the terrace where your Cydno, standing, gloriously nude, defying the sun, holds out her arms to you!

II

L'ONGLE DE SYRINX

You possess the most admirable qualities in the world, O Syrinx!

You are, at the same time, slender as a runner and plump as a quail, white as a white camelia, and red, where it is becoming, as a red peony, appetizing as a young girl and lively as a matron.

I am your acknowledged slave. . . . But, on the next occasion, pare more carefully the nail of your virile finger: you have scratched me!

III

LE PREMIER CHEVEU GRIS

Your breasts are golden apples from the garden of Hesperides, O Syrinx!

Why do you persist in withholding the surrender of your graceful body?

Behold this grey hair in my brown curl: it is the first, I swear, O Syrinx, and your cruelty is the cause of it.

IV

SUPPLIQUE

Lalage, pardon me these three days of sulking!

The hateful old trouble-maker Sophrona said that you speak ill of me. That is why I no longer salute you in passing before your glycins and your rhododendrons.

Pardon me, smile of Lesbos!

Scandalize as much as it pleases you, radiant Lalage, accuse me of being old, of being ugly, of sleeping with a man, a Danish dog, an Egyptian ass or a negro slave, it matters not to me if I may but hear again your sweet laugh, your honeyed voice!

PRAYER

(By F. Jacobs. From *The Pagan*. 1920)

WHY do you not calm me, sweet,
When I tremble so, and cannot cease?
When I am alone, and you come to me,—
However warm the day,—
Such a quivering seizes me,
Such a merciless, poignant shaking,
All my very lips I cannot control,
Till you gather me in your warm strong arms,
Till you have kissed me into a fever,
Till your steady calm has penetrated my body,
And reassured my trembling one
That all is well,
That you are here.

LOVE ATHIRST

(By Ruth Bassett Eddy. From *The Pagan.* 1920)

LAST night, do you recall? You turned your head,
And laid your lips to mine, as we lay there
Under the stars. The sweetness of the night
Somehow became a part of that long kiss,
Until, grown weak with passion,
You fell asleep. But I could not find rest.
The lips that clung to mine no longer gave
A passionate response. They were
Soft and warm and still against my own,—
The lips of a contented, sleepy child.

And oh, I was ashamed—ashamed to feel
Desire to take from your unconscious lips
The drink love had to offer you and me.
I would have been content to let the hours
Go on toward endless time, if I could lie
Against your body's close and yielding warmth;
Heart to heart and breath to breath,
My mouth against your own until I knew
The sweet exhaustion that had given you sleep.

COME AND LIE WITH ME

(By Elsie A. Gidlow. From *The Pagan.* 1920)

COME and lie with me and love me,
Bitterness;
Touch me with your hands a little,
Kiss me, as you lean above me,
With your cold, sadistic kisses;
Wind your hair close, close around me,—
Pain might dissipate this blankness;
Hurt me even, even wound me;
I have need of love that stings.
Come and lie with me and love me,
Bitterness,
So that I can laugh at things.

IN THE RESTAURANT

(By Claire Bu Zard. From *The Pagan.* 1920)

OH, dark and fascinating young man,
(Sitting opposite me at the restaurant-table),
There are spots of color on your thin cheek-bones
And your eyes are deep and smoldering. . . .
Your feverish fingers hold hopefully your glass of milk
And you eat your soft-boiled eggs with a relish.

But I see a black shadow at your elbow,
Oh, dark young man,
And I know the meaning of your too-red cheeks,
And of that reckless light in your too-bright eyes. . . .
I know why you drink that tasteless warm white drink,
And why you suffer soft-boiled eggs at noon. . . .

But I know, too,
Oh, dark and fascinating young man,
(Sitting opposite me at the restaurant-table),
That you are a hundred times more hopeful,
More passionate, more alive than I—
I,—rugged, and bursting my stays with vulgar health,—
I,—eating my juicy steak and cherry pie—
I,—already nearing the age of thirty-nine
And without a lover. . . .

ENTHRALLED

(By Alfred Bryan. From *Pagan Love Lyrics.*[1] 1921)

TEACH me to sin—
In love's forbidden ways,
For you can make all passion pure;
The magic lure of your sweet eyes
Each shape of sin makes virtue praise.

Teach me to sin—
Enslave me to your wanton charms,
Crush me in your velvet arms
And make me, make me love you.
Make me fire your blood with new desire,
And make me kiss you—lip and limb,
Till senses reel and pulses swim.
Aye! even if you hate me,
Teach me to sin.

[1] Copyright, 1921, by Alfred Bryan.

LOVE CHARMS

(By Alfred Bryan. From *Pagan Love Lyrics*)

IF I cannot be your Master, let me be your Slave!
Let me be the wanton of your breast!
Let me be the lover of your limb!
Torture me until the ultimate I crave.

Let me lift unto your lips a redder cup of wine!
Let me whisper in your ear some new desire—
A warrior flame your white flesh to incarnadine.
Then, let my love put out the fire.

Wed me. Make me swear allegiance to your breast,
And tell me that your body I must share
With other lovers,—more of you possessed,—
So I have you some time, what need I care?

BEAUTY

(By Alfred Bryan. From *Pagan Love Lyrics*)

BEAUTY is not modest. Why should Beauty be?
But ugliness is moral after all.
Beauty and concealment have no affinity:
For Ugliness—convention wears a pall.

Beauty bares her loveliness for other eyes to see;
And Truth, when naked only, is divine.
So you, dear heart, are modest in all your nudity
Save when observed by other eyes than mine.

SELFISHNESS

(By Alfred Bryan. From *Pagan Love Lyrics*)

SHE whom I love must be above reproach;
Must veil her face to all admiring eyes;
Must droop her lids to all admiring lovers;
Must not betray the beauty of her limbs
To him and him and him and him.
She must be all our mothers must have been,
And all we think our sisters are
From all the crowd apart, too pure to mar.

But when alone with me—then she may be:
She may be lewd as Messaline was lewd.
She may be nude, and still remain a prude.
'Tis nothing wrong that she may do with me;
She's still a woman, chaste, with modesty.

But let her be of these with other men,
God pity her, for she is,—well, what they?
A harlot, scarlet, crimsoned courtesay, per se
She's worse than that if she's not true to me.

CREATION SONGS

(By Muriel Strode. From *A Soul's Faring*.[1] 1921)

I

I WILL tell you the things that will ravish your ear to hear, for I am Life's lover.
She told me her secrets, as she lay in my wanton arms.
She told me the things of her deep yearning, of her secret heart.
She told them to my love for her, to the press of my breast.
She told herself to my kisses.
She met my warm breath with disclosures, as she held me close in an informing embrace.

II

I am Life's lover!
I plant the meaning of my great yearning upon her upturned lips.
I press her to my breast in a great answering.
She shall define the meaning of my fire and fever.

III

I am the love-mad of life.
I have reached out in my pain to the love-frenzied grouse.
I have called in my understanding to the deer in their rutting season.
I have come with gentle words to the mating chirpings in the caves.
I have touched tenderly the seeking pollen.
I have come with bated breath to the spawn at the beginnings of streams.

[1] Copyright, 1921, by Boni and Liveright, Inc., New York.

I am the ache of overfullness.
My breasts are crowded with containing.
My hands tremble with the eagerness of me.
I am rent and torn with the pain of the unexpressed.

IV

I am drunk with being,—
Life's inebriate reeling down an enchanted way.
I shout my maudlin greeting to the trees.
I grasp familiarly the gentle fingers of the grass.
I press my wine-wet lips to the roses with my insistent kissing.

V

I know the thrill of the grasses when the rain pours over them.
I know the trembling of the leaves when the winds sweep through them.
I know what the white clover felt as it held a drop of dew pressed close in its beauteousness.
I know the quivering of the fragrant petals at the touch of the pollen-legged bees.
I know what the stream said to the dipping willows, and what the moon said to the sweet lavender.
I know what the stars said when they came stealthily down and crept fondly into the tops of the trees.

VI

I am the omnipotent life, the potency-thrill.
I am the fructifier meeting the urge of space, scattering my spawn like the dust of stars in the Milky Way.

I am red fire leaping in and out of channels, the insistence of me, the yearning.
I am the demand.

VII

I am drunk with the wine of me, intoxicant of my own being,
Bacchante of my own soul's steepings,
Beset by the realization of me, driven by knowing.
I pour myself out like the singing starling.
I drink, and kiss Life's wanton lips with the fripping lips of me.

VIII

I am the universe's harlot,
Selling myself to ecstasy's thrills;
Giving myself to be debauched of stars, ravished of ineffableness;
Seduced by a wanton ungraspableness;
Coming to marriage bed with infinity's horde,
Wanton wife of the eternity of things.

THE GOLDEN PAST

(By George Sterling. 1921)

I.

WITHIN the stillness of the crypt he lay—
The vanquished tyrant, quivering and stark,
Shackled, alone with anguish and the dark,
And conscious that the immolating day
Swept on him as a tiger on its prey,
To quench with agonies the vital spark,
When cruel eyes should gloat and laughters mark
The final shames of the tormented clay.

Astounded by atrocities of pain,
He broke the offended silence with a moan—
This offal of the rack and glowing brand—
While, as he strove at the relentless chain
And shuddered, prostrate, on the salted stone,
A dungeon-rat fed on his mangled hand.

II.

But they, his conqueror and faithless queen,
Beneath the midnight moon lay arrogant,
Nor saw her beams on kingly marble slant,—
On jasmine and the crowding roses' sheen,
Nor heard the fingers of the harper glean
Harvests of sound, not heard the ceaseless chant
Of voices to their godhood consonant.
For them the naked dancer swayed unseen.

For them there stood no past, nor time to be,
For whom all rapture was a tideless sea
Wherein they dwelt beyond all sound and sight,
Without a star to touch them with its ray
Nor pulse of waves to reach them where they lay,
Welded in dumb convulsions of delight.

THE KISS OF CONSUMMATION

(By George Sterling. 1921)

LO! Thou has granted us for Thee a name,
But never, Lord, shall there be name for this
The storm and sacrament of love's abyss;
Nor shall the mind conceive nor man's tongue frame
Nor Music in her farthest flight proclaim
The tale of that intolerable bliss
When breathless lips meet in the final kiss,
And mouth on mouth melts to incarnate flame.

When, lest the astounding racks of bliss destroy
The body with its ecstasy alive,—
The maddened flesh grown infinite with joy,
Peace sends her Lethe to the reeling brain,
Ere the inexorable flame revive
And Love that slew sound trumpets o'er the slain.

INFIDELS

(By George Sterling. 1921)

COLD and eternal stare his eyes of stone,
As now, adored across the templed gloom,
The graven god exalts his granite room.
Implacably his acolytes intone:
The smitten gong makes answer in a groan;
Slowly the azures of the worship fume,
Phantoms awhile of that enduring tomb,
And "'Life is evil!'" now the bonzes drone.

Without, a darkness passionate with breath
Of unseen flowers—a fragrance at the shrine
Of two that lie incredulous of death.
The grass is cool beneath her, and the night
Holds, as a rose her immaterial wine,
The moan and murmur of the old delight.

AT MIDNIGHT

(By George Sterling. 1921)

CAST round me now your arms' cool wreath of white!
Forget the day's far wakening, and lie
More close! Without, the weary world goes by,
Hawking its cheats and nostrums in the night.

Be wise a-sudden, giving not a glance
To any anodyne its dupes prescribe
Art, lore, gold, fame and power, each tinsel bribe
That turns the flesh from its inheritance.

This is the only wealth, the only goal
Where one shall stand unhoodwinked for a space,
Gazing upon the Truth with tranquil face,—
Daring to show Life's pitfalls to the soul.

Take payment now for all accurséd hours,
All pain and waste and dreariness, all care!
These are the moments purchased by despair,
And this the joy to which thy sorrow flow'rs.

Wrench from the niggard Fates thy ransomed bliss!
Accept the breathless transports that atone,
With toils the gods were glad to find their own,
And seas of sense that thunder at a kiss.

FLAME

(By George Sterling. 1921)

THOU art that madness of supreme desire,
Which lacking, beauty is but dross and clay.
Within thy veins is all the fire of day
And all the stars divinity of fire.
Thine are the lips and loins that never tire,
And thine the bliss that makes my soul dismay.
Upon thy breast what god at midnight lay,
To make thy flesh the music of his lyre?

Ah! such alone should know thy loveliness!
Ah! such alone should know thy full caress,
O goddess of intolerable delight!
I beg of Fate the guerdon and the grace,
Far beyond death, to know in thine embrace
Eternal rapture in eternal night.

HAPPIEST

(By George Sterling. 1921)

CALLING you now, not for your flesh I call,
  Nor for the mad, long raptures of the night
  And passion in its beauty and its might,
When the ecstatic bodies rise and fall.
I cannot feign: God knows I see it all—
  The flaming senses, raving with delight,
  The leopards, swift and terrible and white,
Within the loins that shudder as they crawl.

All that could I exultingly forego,
  Could I but stand, one flash of time, and see
Your heavenly, entrancing face, and know
    I stood most blest of all beneath the sun,
  Hearing these words from your fond lips to me:
    "I love, love you, and love no other one!"

CONSUMMATION

(By Florence E. von Wien. 1921)

BURNING—relentless burning—
  With the gently caressing fires that will not be calmed .
A delicious sense of stifling.
Suddenly a fierce storm of sharp, exquisite pains . . .
Like little electric needle shocks . . .
Pierces every tiny part of your body—
Till you are raised out of this earth.

A great calm comes over you then—
And you open langorously, luxuriously
Like an enormous, fresh passion flower opens its petals to
    the sun.
Something comes and snuggles into its petals like a honey bee
And they slowly close again—and then—just nothing
    then—
The sensation of having no sensations—great peace, vaste
    space—and
Nothing, nothing, nothing.

SENSUALITY

(By Florence E. von Wien. 1921)

YOU suck in my beauty, like a ravished beast
The trickling blood of fresh, warm meat.
You breathe in the fragrance of my leprous-white skin,
Till, sated with the fullness of your realization,
You loll in my arms—nauseated with over-feasting.

SHE LAY QUITE STILL

(By Orrick Johns. 1921)

SHE lay quite still when morning came,
Her hours of sleep had been but three,
Her eyelids moved, her cheeks were flame.

I know her heart was not the same
As yester-night it had to be;
She lay quite still when morning came.

They quoted her a wanton dame,
This thing I had not thought to see . . .
She lay quite still when morning came.

The bare white thing that was her shame
The morning light kissed tenderly,
Her eyelids moved, her cheeks were flame.

She bore so well her lived fame
It seemed a miracle to me; . . .
She lay quite still when morning came.

Of all the wonders in God's name
No awe like this can come to me . . .
She lay quite still when morning came,
Her eyelids moved, her cheeks were flame.

THE ANSWER

(By Orrick Johns. From *Asphalt*)

CRYING cranes and wheeling crows . . .
I'll remember them," she said;
And I will be your own, God knows,
And the sin be on my head.

I will be your own and glad;
  Lovers would be fools to care
How a thing is good or bad,
  When the sky is everywhere . . .

"I will be your own," she said,
  "Because your voice is like the rain,
And your kiss is wine and bread
  Better than my father's grain."

So I took her where she spoke,
  Breasts of snow and burning mouth . . .
Crying cranes and drifting smoke
  And the blackbirds wheeling south.

SURRENDER

(By Orrick Johns. From *Black Branches*. 1920)

TREASURE I aught beneath the stars
  To scorn thy soul's ihlang-ihlang . . .
Have I some yet crescendent bars
  No other suitor learned or sang?

These searching fingers unashamed,
  Stained with a wine pressed from the sun,
Are they not tigers loosed and tamed
  To fright thee, child of Babylon?

My tangled hairs and anguished jaws
  Above the loom like riddled flags,
Storming beyond insensate laws
  To scorching Hylotheic crags.

Thou shalt fall back, the knotted loins
  Of passion struggle on unbound!
The pillars and the deep-lunged groins
  Of reticence are flung to ground.

Yet for thy love's ihlang-ihlang
  These fiery flanks obey, are still:
And the uncivilized mustang
  Of beauty sleeps . . . it is thy will.

THE FASHIONABLE HOUR

(By Orrick Johns. From *Black Branches.* 1920)

THE window flames no longer clamber
  Like gonfarons against the sky,
And faintly blue-green glows the camber
  Of her thigh.

The febrile radiance left of day
  Creeps through the forest of her passion,
And riant in the dusk I stay
  A man of fashion . . .

Her cigarette, avid of design,
  Is one still spark by shadow pressed,
And like a moon beneath, benign,
  Glimmers her breast.

IRONY

(By Olga Mishkin. 1921)

HE loves me—I know it,
  And yet my heart—it weeps,
And the sad, gloomy night weeps with it;
And the moaning of the plaintive winds
Echoes my sighs.

I tire—and soon my heavy head rests its somber weights
    upon a cushion of down.
I slumber—and I dream;
Dear dreams that fill my false heart with joy,
When—
A kiss burns my lips;
A fond embrace scorches my shrinking body;
A merry, joyous laughter rings in my burning ears,
And I awake—
I see—my master before me.

But my thoughts?
Far, far away they have flown
To him who loves me,
And whom I dare to love. . . .

Another kiss—another passionate embrace,
And he—the keeper of my wretched body laughs again—
happily,

And I?
I laugh too,
With bitterness. . . .

SURRENDER

(By Olga Mishkin. 1921)

THE night shades are lowering;
The sun in the heavens, like a king in all his glory
Adorned in dazzling raiment which reflects its colors in the
mirrored skies,
Slowly and majestically bows himself away from off the earth,
Leaving the world to encroaching darkness;
To the mysteries of night.

And I?—I am afraid;
My heart trembles and sinks with fear and expectation of what
awaits me;
In my brain there is confusion
And my thoughts run wildly, beating against my throbbing
temples—
Shrieking their mockery and derision as I gaze after the last
rays of light,
Seeking protection and solace in the dying day.

How I long to weep—Yet am I not happy?
How I could dance and laugh and scream with mad joy:
But a mournful sadness steals over my heart and I shiver
with cold;
Something—something is ebbing away from within me.

The minutes are fleeing fast,
And soon—I shall lie in the warm embrace of my Love.
He will draw me close to him—and a little closer,
And his strong arms will soothe my quivering body:
And his tender kisses will cool the fever of my burning lips,
And through his gentleness and compassion, he will leave
my soul untouched, unscarred
And my love for him will grow a thousand fold,
And with happiness I will lay my virginity at his feet,
And with joy—
But oh, my God, how I fear! . . .

The sun shines brightly—
It is a new day—
It is all over. . . .

My heart is cold—and I am sad,
And how I loathe the bright sun and the merry birds and
the beautiful flowers.
It is all over. . . .

INFATUATION

(By Lee Timberlake. 1921)

IN bat black night,
When stars slide low
And look;
Your wet red mouth,
A suckling rose,
Seeks mine
And draws,
Retreats,
Provokes,
Then melts my soul
And moulds it yours.

AT REFUGE

(By Lee Timberlake. 1921)

AT night
Haunted and scant clad,
I fled my sorrow
Into a garden.

Tall lillies
Pressed pale cheeks
Against my ravished breast
And shed golden tears.

A rose vine
Drew in her thorns
To passionately entwine my thighs,
Bedewing my mouth, while

Violets broke precious perfume
Across my feet,
And pansies pleaded wisdom,
With upturned judicial faces.

I was comforted.

MIDSUMMER

(By Lee Timberlake. 1921)

I HAVE need of love,
I am parched,
And I am barren.
I await the thunder of your demand,
While I crave the lightning shock
Of your embrace
To plough my hardened breast
To flower.
I must have the rainfall
Of your kisses
Increase to torrents
To saturate my sterility;
So the hot sun
Of your smile
Will burst my bud-bonds,
For I must become fecund
That I may sing,
I have need of you!

DENOUEMENT[1]

(By J. V. A. Weaver. From *In American.* 1921)

SO now I get the dirty throwdown, huh?
What do I mean? Yeh, that's a good one, ain't it?
How do you get that way? You think I'm blind?
I seen you with that girl the other night!

Aw, Frank, how could ya ever come to do it?
I ain't changed, am I? Ain't I just as swell?
Don't my eyes shine the same way, just for you?
Don't you remember out to old San Soozy
We won long-distance prizes, dancin' together?
You says, "You keep the prize; what's mine is yourn,
And vicey versy." Yes, and don't you remember
When you—when you first kissed me in Jim's Ford,
And all them lovely things you says to me,
And me believin' 'em, because I loved you? . . .

I should of knew, I should of knew, I should of!
Men is the same, kiddin' a girl along,
Makin' her love 'em, till she lost her brains
And done what never can't be undid now!

[1] Copyright, 1921, by Alfred A. Knopf, New York.

But still. . . .
That night the stars was winkin' down,
And looked so bright and happy, just like me.
The little waves was chucklin' 'round the boat,
You and the wind took turns, kissin' my forrid.
Down underneath I felt the engines pumpin'
Just like your heart, pressin' against my cheeks.

The lights was out, it was so dark and haunted,
I felt so safe with them big arms around me,
And dreamy, with the niggers singin' soft,
Playin' their yukalalies. And I says,—
Don't you remember what I says? I say,
"See them two 'rows o' lights along the shore?
Them is the city's teeth, shinin' so white;
The city's laughin', just like you and me;
Laughin' and laughin'. Everybody's glad." . . .

The fool I was! The stupid, crazy fool!
I listened to your talk, give in to you,
Lovin' you heart and soul, never went home
Till noon, lied to 'em all—and now—and now—

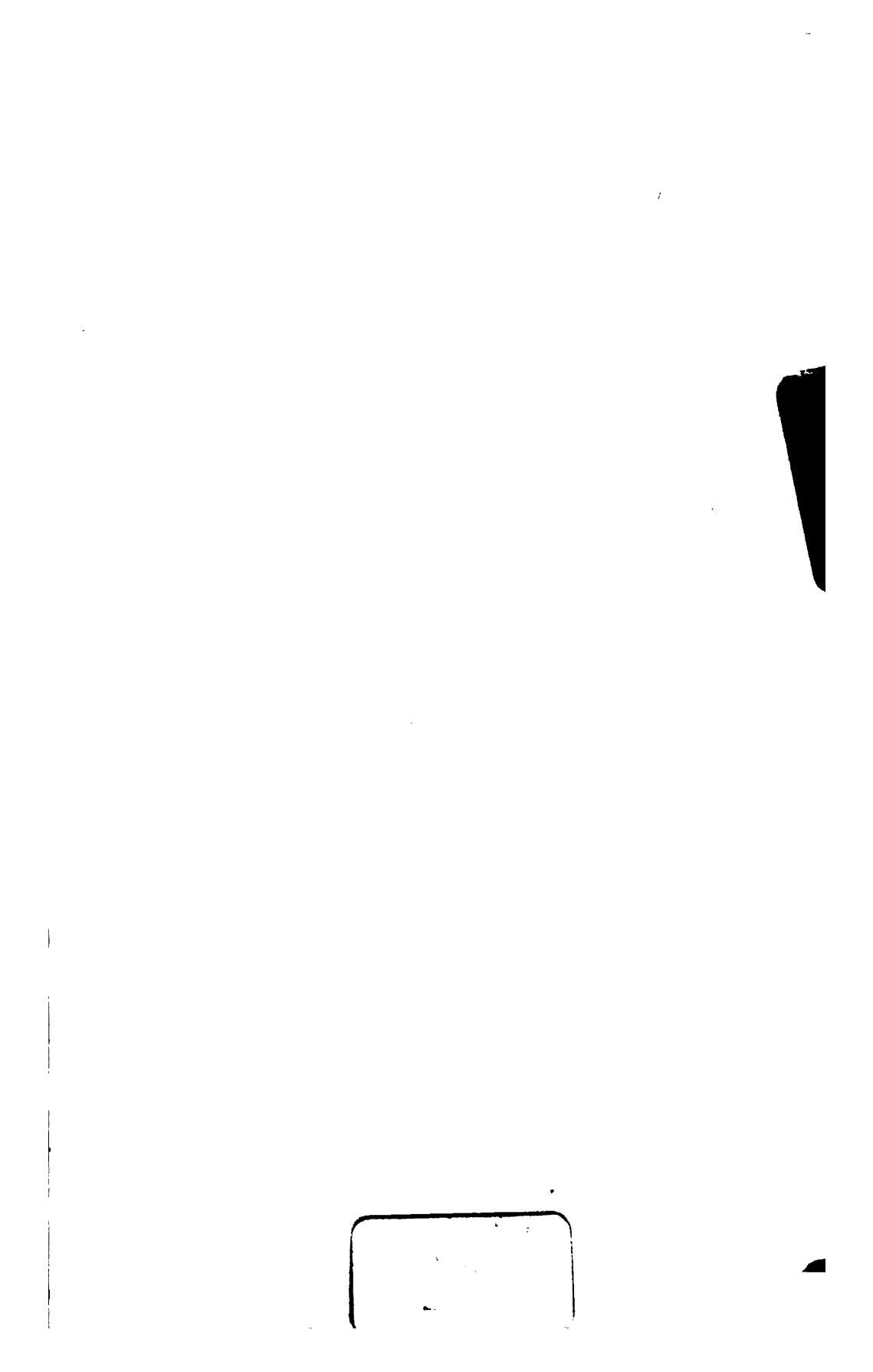
I'm finished!—Thrun away! . . . Them lights was teeth,
The teeth the city's got, to tear and tear me—
Murderin', tearin' teeth! They got me in 'em! . . .

Go on away! I never want to see you!
Go get that red-head fool, tell her I sent you!
I hope she'll be another fool like me,—
I hope you burn and burn in Hell!

I hope—
Oh, what's there anything to hope for, now? . . .

End of Volume Two

AFTERWORD

IF aught indelicate has jarred the sense,
If aught of sophistry has brought a frown,
Perhaps a counter charge might be set down
And leave the reader with a sad defence.
If aught of flighty verse or tale intense
Has led you on, this final page to crown
With comment critical, some slight renown
Accrues to me through that same evidence,
For were you not, yourself, on pleasure bent,
You surely had not read as far as here.
I pray you judge me by my good intent
To bring a smile or chase away a tear,
And if my methods must for pardon sue,
I first must bid you take my Point of View.

(From *The Point of View.* 1905)